Marxism Today

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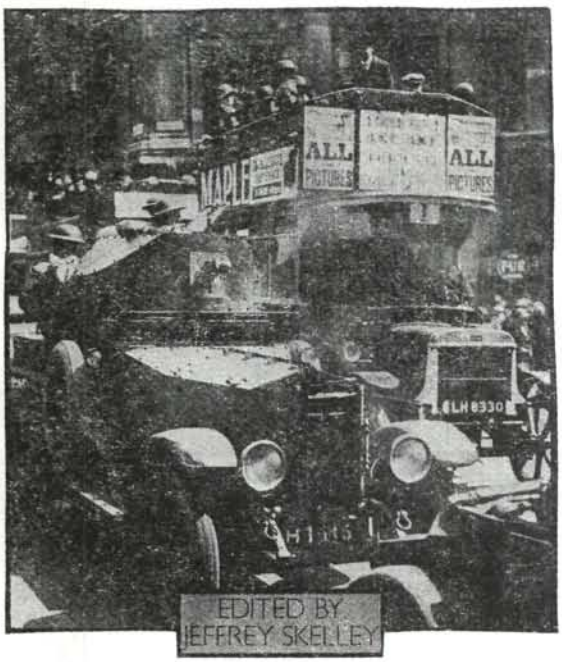

From the cover of
Lawrence and Wishart's
latest book on
The General Strike

Editorial Comments:

Jon Chadwick — Alternative Culture

Fidel Castro — Historical Analysis of the Cuban Revolution Part 1

Renzo Galeotti — On the Death of Paolo Pasolini

Discussion:

Gavin Mackenzie — *Class and Class Consciousness: Marx Re-examined*

Pat Sloan
Dorothy Friedmann — *Socialist Democracy—Some Problems*

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Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

Volume 20, Number 3

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CONTENTS

	Editorial Comments	73
Jon Chadwick	Alternative Culture	78
Fidel Castro	Historial Analysis of the Cuban Revolution: Part 1	85
Renzo Galeotti	On the Death of Paolo Pasolini	93
Discussion:		
Gavin Mackenzie	Class and Class Consciousness: Marx Re-examined	95
Pat Sloan Dorothy Friedmann	Socialist Democracy—Some Problems	101

The front cover was designed by Pat Cook

SOME ARTICLES PLANNED FOR THE APRIL-MAY AND FOLLOWING ISSUES

Jack Ashton	Problems of Left Unity in Scotland
Dave Cook	Parliament and Problems of Power
Roger Hallam	Marxism and Modern Social Theory
James Harvey	Theories of Inflation
John Hoffman	Engels and Carlyle
Bob Rowthorn	Inflation and Marxist Theory
Willie Thompson	Scottish Devolution
Jack Woddis	Theoretical Problems of the State
Documents:	
Fidel Castro	Historical Analysis of the Cuban Revolution: Part II
Communist Party of Spain	Manifesto—Programme (extracts)
Communist Party of France	Documents of 22nd Congress (extracts)

Special Issue on the General Strike

Discussion on Socialist Democracy—Some Problems

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Editorial Comments

IT is very timely indeed that Lawrence & Wishart have published the "Lectures on Fascism" that were given by Palmiro Togliatti (known then in the international communist movement as Ercoli) at the Lenin School in Moscow in the course of 1935[1]. Most of his students were Italians of working class origin, coming from fascist prisons, with little experience of study.

From its first foundation in 1919 the Communist International discussed the nature of fascism. But it is not by accident that Italian Communists, coming from the country that first experienced the savagery of fascist dictatorship, should have made a particularly great contribution to understanding both its danger and its character.

In the late twenties and early thirties there were many incorrect approaches to fascism not only amongst radicals and socialists, but in the international communist movement. Togliatti himself was influenced by the weaknesses of this period, but by the time of the *Lectures* he had discarded nearly all sectarian approaches, and along with the Communists of other countries, in the first place Dimitrov, was contributing to the attitudes that were to be expressed and accepted at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International.

He had come to see that fascism, like all phenomena, was something that could only be understood in its process, development, not as something static and finished. It could advance in and take different forms in different countries. It was not to be confused with other forms of capitalist rule and most certainly not with bourgeois democracy, however great the limitations of capitalist democracy might be.

Togliatti accepted the Communist International's definition of fascism as "the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capitalism". But he always insisted with especial force on the efforts of fascism to gain *mass* support and to develop broad *mass* organisations.

[1] Palmiro Togliatti—*Lectures on Fascism*, with foreword by James Klugmann, Lawrence & Wishart, paperback, £2.00.

Continuing Lenin's thought, Togliatti in his *Lectures* showed how monopoly capitalism in crisis turned against bourgeois democracy:

> "The bourgeoisie must turn against what it itself created, because what once was a factor of its development has become an obstacle to the preservation of capitalist society".

From this there followed the urgent necessity for the working class to build up the broadest and most mass struggle for the defence of democracy, against fascism, the imperative need for the working class to win allies in this struggle.

If this were understood, and if the appropriate mass action were developed, then, however *inevitable* the trend of capitalism towards reaction, authoritarianism or fascism, the victory of this trend was *not* inevitable, and the broad democratic struggle for democracy, led by the working class, could become an essential step on the road to socialism.

There are many differences between the world of the seventies and the world of the thirties. No-one would have protested more loudly than Togliatti against any attempt to freeze his *Lectures* into a dateless blueprint. No-one saw more clearly than he the need to study every form of reaction in each country, every form of the fight for democracy, against reaction, against fascism.

But the *Lectures* are not only very valuable for the light they throw on the history of the international working class movement, but because their general lessons are very timely and topical today.

THE GENERAL STRIKE

The Lawrence & Wishart book on the General Strike, for the fiftieth anniversary, was published last month. The publishers are to be congratulated on getting it into paperback for £2. The hardback edition (which contains endpapers reproducing the Home Office Register of "Disturbances and Agitations") is sold at £6.00[2].

This volume contains a combination of

[2] Jeffrey Skelly (editor)—*The General Strike*, Lawrence & Wishart, hardback £6.00, paperback £2.00, 1976.

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theoretical and historical analysis of the causes of the Strike, its course, its betrayal and consequences, with newly researched Regional Studies from nine regions of Great Britain, and with personal reminiscences by people who took part. Many narratives of the Strike have been available, and more will be published—but nothing which in this way combines the true story of the mass determination and initiative of the workers, the intransigeance of the Conservative Government and the intrigues and betrayals by the Labour leaders, with a political explanation of the background, causes and consequences which enables readers today to draw their practical conclusions from it. Nor is there any other book which, as this one does, makes clear the role of the Communists—mistakes and all.

The Communist Party History Group collaborated in the production of the work both through collective discussion and the preparation of Regional Studies.

The Regional Studies come from Scotland, the North-West, the Midlands, South Wales, London and the South-West; the personal reminiscences from Scotland, Lancashire, Yorkshire and London. These form the centre of the book. The opening essay by John Foster, with the provocative title "British Imperialism and the Labour Aristocracy", probes deeply and with new insights into the background for the Strike and its betrayal. Then follows James Klugmann's study of the Strike itself and the roles played by the different forces it brought into action. The volume concludes with Martin Jacques' study of the consequences of the Strike—its short and long-term effects in the Labour movement and British politics up to the present.

ONLY ONE DIED

The Scarman Tribunal was set up in reply to the widespread and growing demands for a public inquiry that followed the events of September 15, 1974 in and around Red Lion Square, when the student Kevin Gately died opposing racism and fascism.

The National Front had called a march through central London under the slogan "Send Them Back" to conclude with a meeting at Conway Hall. A counter demonstration was called by the London Area Council of Liberation together with a march which was to end by an outdoor meeting in Red Lion Square.

The Enquiry lasted for 28 days. There can be few such detailed records of demonstrations or of police activity against demonstrators. And the evidence of police bias and over-reaction stands out with the greater clarity because it is presented by participators in the demonstration under hostile interrogation by skilled legal representatives of the police. The questioning of the police witnesses by the legal representatives of Liberation (London Area Council), the National Union of Students and of the International Marxist Group is also extremely revealing.

We should be very grateful to Tony Gilbert for writing and Kay Beauchamp for publishing long extracts from the Enquiry with revealing commentary by Tony Gilbert[3]. Too often the contents of such reports are not available in a form readily accessible to members of the working class and progressive movement.

The book, which is sponsored by Liberation, the National Council of Civil Liberties and the National Union of Students, contains a message from Arnold Wesker praising the dramatic and human quality of Gilbert's commentary:—

> "the manner in which you've assembled your material provides great insights into the workings of the legal and judicial world".

Among the lessons that stand out from the evidence of the demonstrators is not only the methods of the police but the importance of discipline in the working class and progressive movement including the discipline of demonstration. Where that discipline was one-sidedly broken, whatever the intentions of those who did so, in fact it helped only the case of the police.

DIALOGUE WITH BUDDHISTS IN JAPAN

Between September 18-22 of last year *Akahata*, the daily paper of the Communist Party of Japan, published a series of articles by Kenji Miyamoto, Chairman of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Japan, under the general title "Standing at the Turning Point of History: Points of Contact between Scientific Socialism and Religion".

The article was essentially in two parts. The first dealt with a number of discussions, formal and informal, between Japanese

[3] Tony Gilbert—*Only One Died*, published by Kay Beauchamp, 45 Clissold Court, Green Lanes, London N4, 254 pages, £1.80.

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Communists and members of the Soka Gakkai, a Buddhist and religious organisation, in particular with discussions between Kenji Miyamoto and Daisaku Ikeda, the President of Soka Gakkai. The second contained some general reflections on the Marxist approach to religion and on dialogue between Marxists and those of religious faith.

The specific discussions between the CPJ and Soka Gakkai was complicated by the fact that the latter had been a principal supporter of the political organisation, Komei-To, which for several years had been openly and vigorously anti-communist. Moves within the Soka Gakkai for the separation of religion from this political organisation made possible the discussions which took place in the last months of 1974.

A 10-year agreement was finally drafted and approved by both sides early in 1975, which dealt with mutual relations and certain broad common objectives.

It was agreed that both sides "for the purpose of establishing mutual relations of confidence, will do their best to promote mutual understanding between the two organisations, while respecting each other's autonomy", that Soka Gakkai "will not take a hostile attitude towards scientific socialism", whilst the Communist Party of Japan "will unconditionally defend freedoms of creed and religion, including freedom of missionary work, under whatever systems", that both sides "respect dialogue to the utmost", and "settle through consultation" problems that mutually arise.

With regard to common objectives, it was agreed that both would stand on the side of the mass of the people, that both would work to "eliminate social injustices and improve people's welfare", for "the eternal peace of the world", for the complete abolition of "nuclear weapons that threaten the very foundations of the existence of mankind", that both, on the basis of a common recognition that a current exists in Japan aiming at a new variety of fascism, would "give full play to their intelligent wisdom to thwart its danger in time" and "resolutely oppose any fascistic attack designed to deprive the people of their democratic and fundamental human rights and to infringe on their freedom of political activity and on freedom of creed and religion".

From the moment of its acceptance the 10-year Agreement has met with problems. There have been differing interpretations, and other complex issues are likely to arise.

But, writes Kenji Miyamoto:

> "The historic significance is . . . not to be obliterated no matter what stormy troubles may arise in the coming years".

MARXISM AND RELIGION

In the second part of his article Miyamoto reflects on general problems of the Marxist approach to religion and to dialogue between Marxists and Buddhists and people of other faiths.

Marx and Engels and Lenin, he argues:—

> "at times employed the phrase of struggle against religion with reference to corrupt and degenerate religion and various religious superstitions, they, however, advocated this in the philosophical and ideological sense. They persistently advocated the guarantee of freedom of religious belief. Marx and Engels, for instance, rejected as absurd a demand put forward by the Blanquists for abolition of religion; Lenin, on his part, made this more thoroughgoing in his policy towards religion.
>
> "They were well aware of the historic origins and social foundations of religion. . . . While philosophically making no compromise with the religious world view—the view that God created this earth—they held it more important that believers in religion were all people of this earth, so their fundamental objective was that, with or without religious beliefs, workers, peasants, citizens and other broad-ranging people, rather than standing opposed to each other over problems relating to religious faiths, should unite themselves in struggle for social progress and abolition of the system of exploitation.
>
> "Though the problem of the philosophical world view assumes an important place in Marxism as a matter of course, it is on account of this practical point of view that our Party does not call for explicit approval of atheism in its Programme. At the same time, our Party, while admitting new members on condition that they approve our Programme and Constitution, does not demand that they have a theoretical grasp of detailed points pertaining to religious beliefs. We have, for instance, had the experience of welcoming to our ranks Mr. Sakae Akaiwa, who was a Christian clergyman, after the end of the War".

Miyamoto discusses the future of religion under socialism and communism. It is a matter of great interest what will have happened to the development of religion in communist society. Under communism many things of which religious people have dreamed will have come true. What today are known as "social evils" will have vanished. But, as well as joy and pleasure, there will still be suffering and distress on such things as sickness, love, hopes and realities related to temperament and talent, span of life, human relations. Whatever forms of religion may still exist will certainly be freely practised:—

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"Under whatever social system, including communist society at its higher stage, freedoms related to religion, including freedom of dissemination of religion, will not be abridged".

POETRY OF THE THIRTIES

The best things in Trevor Tolley's The *Poetry of the Thirties*[4] are the wealth of long quotations and the bibliography which also covers memoirs and biographies. The quotations include whole poems not easily available elsewhere; for the best anthology Professor Tolley can recommend is Robin Skelton's rarely used *Poetry of the Thirties* (Penguin) which is not only a lengthy idiosyncratic selection but contains only about half as much print as Tolley's book. *Poems for Spain*, John Lehmann's excellent anthology, has never been reprinted; and Auden's poems from the nineteen-thirties were politically revised, cut or deleted from his later collected editions. A modern reader interested in the period can gain at least some idea of its richness by reading the poems quoted—including some by writers like Idris Davies, T. A. R. Hyndman and Charles Donnelly, who are not in Skelton's anthology at all. Unlike some other critics, Tolley has done his homework; he has read conscientiously through not only *New Writing* and *New Verse* but also *Left Review* and *Poetry and the People*, and reprints poems and criticisms from them even when he dislikes them.

It's a pity so much industry and so much investment in print and paper could not have been devoted to producing a collection of Thirties poetry and prose, rather than a critical book which in the main rehashes traditional judgments and prejudices. For we do badly *need* such a collection, so that the examples and lessons of the Thirties can yield their full cultural value for a generation facing different but comparable problems in relating its political commitment to literature and art.

Quotations apart, the book does not do much in this direction. The relation between poetry and politics is complex, and many thirties writers certainly over-simplified it. But a critic who apparently feels all political poetry (even that of Wilfred Owen) as slightly inferior cannot throw much light on the poetry of the thirties. Tolley has a respect for the relatively few political poems (largely from the Spanish war) in which "experience is nakedly faced", and not much for those by left-wing intellectuals in revolt against their culture and class. Such a revolt he feels, is not to be taken seriously. Whether in the British thirties or the American sixties, "the revolutionary behaviour was a measure of the capacity and willingness to tolerate deviance from the affluent and liberal society against which they revolted". But the society of the Means Test, the Sedition Act and Mosley was not all that affluent and only precariously liberal: and the revolt of socialists and anti-fascists against it, despite its immaturities, proved deep and serious—like the modern student revolt in the crisis stricken capitalist world of the seventies.

Professor Tolley may be right in pointing to the lack of felt experience as the great weakness in the political poems of the Auden-Spencer-Day-Lewis group. This was indeed widely argued on the left at the time. On the other hand, any writer who *did* attempt to gain experience by directly participating in the struggle is usually dismissed by him as a "doctrinaire Communist" (the epithet recurs like a nervous tic). This covers Edgell Rickward, Montagu Slater, Randall Swingler and nearly everyone who wrote for *Left Review*.

Tolley does not show the crude cold war bias of such academic critics of thirties literature as D. S. Maxwell and Hugh Ford (though he tends rather uncritically to accept anti-Communist revelations). He sees the case for a popular front against Fascism: he argues that Communists were at the core of resistance in Spain. Nevertheless his attitude is curiously remote and patronising, even while he concedes that the poetry helps to make the period alive and understandable (Caudwell's death was "a loss to English intellectual life, though not, perhaps, as great as some have suggested". John Cornford's life was "adequate ot the minor legend that surrounds him". And so on).

A serious Marxist study of the period remains to be written. Meanwhile the reader will get more understanding of the poetic aims and problems of the time from Louis MacNeice's short book *Modern Poetry* (published 1938 and recently reprinted by Oxford) than from Tolley's much heavier and costlier volume.

HUGH MACDIARMID'S POETRY

Hugh MacDiarmid, nationalist and communist, is widely recognised as the major Scottish literary figure of the twentieth

[4] A. T. Tolley—*The Poetry of the Thirties*, 446 pp, Gollancz, £6.50.

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century, and is placed by many among the greatest three or four poets in the whole rich tradition of Scottish literature.

The re-publication—now in paperback—of *The Hugh MacDiarmid Anthology*,[5] and its adoption by the Open University as a set book in its twentieth century poetry course are to be welcomed as making possible a much wider knowledge and understanding of a body of work which will rank among the finest literary products of this or any other country.

This is a representative anthology, although perhaps less so than the editors claim. The early lyrics seem inadequately represented, with only six pieces from the 1925 *Sangschaw* collection, and a similar number from *Penny Wheep* (1926). Although the poet himself says (in the latest issue of *Scottish Marxist*) that he now rejects them completely and would never write anything like them again, because they tend to oversimplify a very difficult and complex world, they remain fine examples of the work of a great intellect trying to start from simple things and range "Heichts o' the lift and benmaist deeps o' sea."

One may also beg leave to regret the omission of *Lament for the Great Music* (from the 1934 *Stony Limits*) with its cry of "baffled Samson" against this kind of world "Swollen huge with thoughts not thought that should have been thought,/Watchwords not proclaimed, songs not sung,/Tears unshed for ever and deeds undone beyond achievement now."

But these are small criticisms. *A Drunk Man/A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* is there in full, and printed without the irritating subheadings included in the 1962 collection, so that the great intellectual sweep of the work can be better appreciated. There are extracts from all the published collections, and the later, more difficult works—those described as "chopped up prose" or as an attempt to tackle "the philosophical implications of the scientific investigation of the universe," depending on the point of view—are also represented, and co-editor Alexander Scott, while criticising aspects of this work, invites us to be humble enough to recognise that these can only be interim judgments. From the different perspective of the future, much that seems difficult and "un-poetic" to us may be seen to be a great pioneering effort to realise Wordworth's vision of the poet and the man of science working together to enhance and enrich the lives of all humanity.

A SOVIET STUDY OF WHITE COLLAR WORKERS IN BRITAIN

We have just received a study on "White Collar Workers in Bourgeois Society"[6], based specifically on their situation in Britain. It is by V. V. Peschansky of the Soviet Institute of World Economy and International Relations, who is a specialist in the field of contemporary British economic and social conditions, particularly those of the working class.

The essence of his thesis is that the majority of "white collar" workers, of office and professional, non-manual workers are coming, in a number of ways, closer to the industrial working class, that their psychology, consciousness are undergoing important changes, that significant sections of them are joining with the organised working class movement, and that, as a result, there is an important process of change in their objective political role in capitalist society.

In the course of a detailed study he, incidentally, pays tribute to pioneer Marxist works in Britain like F. Klingender's "Condition of Clerical Labour in Britain" (1935), Allen Hutt's "Position of the English Working Class" (1934), Andrew Grant's "Socialism and the Middle Classes" (1958) and Hymie Frankel's "Capitalist Society and Modern Sociology".

The author discusses in his introduction the complex question of definition of terms like "white collar", "clerical", "professional", "non-manual" workers, "salaried employees" etc., and the categories which he is studying under the title "*Sluzhashchie*", which it is not easy accurately to translate.

He examines in successive chapters the growth of the white-collared, the changes in their work, their social and economic activities (turn to collective action, rise of militancy etc.), the growth of white collar and professional trade unions, their political life and struggles.

Peschansky's study will certainly be of great value in our discussion on the class structure of Britain and in general on problems of class and class consciousness and we hope to publish later a detailed review. An English translation would be welcome.

[5] Michael Gzieve and Alexander Scott (editors)—*The Hugh MacDiarmid Anthology: Poems in Scots and English*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, paperback £2.75.

[6] V. V. Peschansky—*Sluzhashchie v Burzhuaznom Obshchestve*, Nauka Publishing House, Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Moscow, 1975.

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Alternative Culture

Jon Chadwick

(Jon Chadwick is a theatre director. He has worked at the Royal Court Theatre, the Glasgow Citizens Theatre, the Watford Palace Theatre, the Half-Moon and the Roundhouse. He is presently working with a play about the General Strike called "The Nine Days and Saltley Gates", which is currently touring the areas of the National Union of Mineworkers.)

Over the past ten to fifteen years, in many areas of artistic and cultural practice, our society has witnessed the development of a movement which has declared war on the 'establishment' and has proposed and advocated 'the alternative'. The phenomenon has affected more or less every area of cultural life. In the theatre, there was the growth of the 'fringe', the radical influence of American groups like *The Living Theatre* and the *La Mama Troupe* and of the work of the Polish Theatre Laboratory under the direction of Jerzy Grotowski. Parallel with this, but certainly developing within the same ambience, there was the more directly political theatre of groups like *CAST* (the Cartoon Archetypal Slogan Theatre) and *Agit-Prop* (which later changed its name to *Red Ladder*) and then the flowering of the Community Theatre movement and the birth of numerous small and medium-sized groups touring labour movement venues, community centres, colleges and schools.

Perhaps it is inaccurate to band these disparate developments together. The more politically orientated perhaps took their inspiration more from the agit-prop theatre movement of the thirties. However, from a technical point of view—the rejection of naturalism and illusionism, the eschewal of the box-set and the 'well-made' play, the adoption of simple and more direct staging—there were many points of identity.

In Film

In film, there was the development of the 'underground cinema', the interest in the films of Kenneth Anger and Andy Warhol and the impact of the development of easier-to-use 16mm. and 8mm. equipment. There was the foundation of the London Film Co-op, making the processing, editing and showing of these films cheaper and more accessible. Similar to the theatre there was a parallel growth of the political cinema, the influence of radical American film groups like *Newsreel*, the later work of Godard and his colleagues in France and, in this country, *Cinema Action* and the *Berwick Street Film Collective*. Once again although the technical basis of production was shared, the political cinema perhaps took its inspiration from the early Soviet cinema and the work of Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov.

Publishing

In publishing, there was the growth of the 'underground' press, *International Times, OZ* and *Ink*. Here again, the technical developments in printing, photography and graphic materials led to dramatic changes in lay-out and presentation. Here again, too, there were more specifically political journals such as *Black Dwarf* and the ill-fated *Seven Days* aiming at a national circulation. At a local level there are the local community newspapers like the *Manchester Free Press* and a host of others.

Music and Dance

In music, similar developments have been more widespread and difficult to trace. Certainly the evolution of magnetic tape, the steps forward in sound technology and amplification, the electrification of music and the mass production of musical instruments, especially the guitar, have had a profound impact. On the one hand there has been the influence of the folk revival and the way this tradition has been incorporated within the overall development of rock music. On the other, the effect of the 'drug culture' within these developments has been considerable. Performance techniques have harked back to the days of *Dada*. More *avant-garde* groups like the *Soft Machine* have perhaps taken their inspiration from Stockhausen and more recently from Cage.

The music scene also produced the mass music festivals which probably reached their zenith at Woodstock in 1969 and their nadir at Watchfield in 1975. The directly political trend has never been so strong in music. However, rock groups did give benefits for the UCS work-in and many of the political theatre groups use rock music in their work.

In dance, there has been a radical movement away from classical ballet. Again the influence of Americans, such as Marthe Graham and Merce Cunningham, has been profound. In Britain there has been the setting up of the London Dance Com-

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mune and the work of *Moving Being*, who produce multi-media shows using music, slides and lights as well as poetry, acting and dance.

Education, Law, Psychology

In education, there has been the growth of Free Schools and counter-courses at colleges and universities. In law, there has been the *Community Law Centre* movement, bringing the services of radical lawyers and solicitors into a closer relationship with the needs of the local community. In psychiatry, the work of Cooper and Laing has represented a radical departure from orthodox concepts of normality and sanity. Similarly the work of Perls and his ideas of gestalt therapy has influenced the growth of therapy groups and encounter groups, which have brought new techniques into the 'treatment' of mental distress. In the domain of personal relationships and living style, there has been the commune movement, the attempts to find an alternative to the nuclear family and to break down the normal division of housework.

Art and Religion

In art, there have been similar radical movements, particularly in the trends towards anti-art, the arrangements of 'happenings', famous proponents of which are Tinguely and Lebel, and 'action-painting'. There has been the development of environmental sculpture and the use of inflatables. In eating habits, there has been the development of macrobiotics and vegetarianism. In religion, there has been a growing interest in and practice of oriental religions. Within academic disciplines, there have been non-marxist or pseudo-marxist radical movements in philosophy and sociology. In literature and poetry, there has been the development of concrete poetry and the radical tradition traced by names like Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs.

Unity of Disparate Activities

In politics there has been the interest in radical theorists such as Debray, Fanon and Marcuse, as well as the advocacy of anarchist practice and the advocacy of 'direct action' tactics. I can imagine anyone who knows more about any one of these given fields of activity than I do, wincing and heading for the typewriter to compose a letter of protest. I can also imagine people with a more extensive knowledge being able to add to my list. Still further I can imagine people being alarmed that I should indiscriminately throw together such disparate activities and practices of such varying apparent political importance. Is there any justification for claiming that these different developments have any unity such that they can be termed a movement? Beyond their coincidence in time and the society they share in common, beyond the transfer of personnel from one activity to another, beyond the unity of the sort which brings certain books together on a shelf at a certain time in a certain place, is there any real identity between them?

I would say that the unity consists in a process of recognition, that a participant in one practice would 'recognise' the meaning of the activity of a participant in another practice. This might not go for all the activities that I have mentioned. The process of recognition might involve a simultaneous process of rejection. If this sounds complicated it is as complicated as attempting to trace the unity of a person's life, why *this* person wears *this* kind of clothes, reads *this* newspaper, eats *this* kind of food, says *this* kind of thing to the person they love, likes *this* colour, goes to *this* kind of pub, likes *this* kind of music, gets on well with *this* kind of person and so on. It is easier with a person since, of course, they embody their own identity. We perceive the unity of all the complex decisions which they make or do not make, or which are forced upon them, when we meet them in the flesh.

Those processes, activities, images or institutions wherein and through which people recognise themselves or identify themselves we call culture. This is difficult because at one moment the identity of a culture appears to be determined by subjective factors and at another it is determined by class. To call the activities which I have listed a culture or even a sub-culture is inadequate because this would imply that they were fixed in their unity instead of conveying that they were constantly developing, constantly defying what might hold them together. However it is also true to say that what these different activities have in common is their claim to have made a radical departure from what is orthodox and established in their given field. Another common aspect is the central and unifying role which the media have played in the movement as a whole.

How Far is this New?

There is also the question of whether this movement is anything really new. Capitalism itself is radical. Since its inception it has regenerated itself by its own radicalism. Ideologically, it has consistently produced philosophies which have apparently threatened its own existence, constantly produced what has been termed 'rebellions in the superstructure'. As I have pointed out, many of artistic developments which I have described have repeated former movements. The dominant philosophy of the 'alternative culture', which is a loose mix of anarchism and utopianism, has been a common feature of our society, especially during times

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of social crisis; for example, groups like the Diggers during the English Civil War. However never has the philosophy pervaded and sustained itself through such a multiplicity of different activities. It is this extraordinary proliferation and its apparent unity which makes the phenomenon unprecedented. For this reason alone it is important for us to look carefully at this movement.

Importance of the Movement

I do not intend here to give a detailed account of the developments within the specific media but rather to come to some understanding of its source, to talk about some of the more general aspects of the movement and to draw some conclusions about its consequences for the Communist Party. There are a number of other reasons why this movement may be considered important. First of all, arising as it has, during a period of extreme crisis for British capitalism, it may give us some more general indications about the way in which cultural trends occur in our society, about the specific nature of the present ideological crisis and about the unique content of our own cultural revolution.

Secondly, these different practices are not merely the effects of a general crisis of capitalism, they are a response to it, however wayward or illusory. We need to look with both criticism and self-criticism at the forms of consciousness and forms of organisation which they have developed.

Thirdly, along with these developments there have been technical innovations, both from the point of view of style and of technology, within the media, which may have a bearing on the Party's propaganda work. Fourthly, since this movement arises specifically out of the contradictions within the conditions lived by intellectuals and represents a tendency within this particular stratum and because it harbours within it anti-communist prejudices, it is important to understand its significance in relation to our appeal to intellectuals.

I would just like to make clear what I mean by this last point, since, as Gramsci points out in his essay *The Formation of Intellectuals,* we all engage in intellectual and philosophical activity to a greater or lesser extent. What I mean by intellectuals are those people whose relationship to production is characterised by the sale of their mental, rather than their physical, labour power. This would include artists and academics as well as white collar workers in administrative, technical and supervisory grades, despite the fact that much of the work these people do might have manual elements. In making this definition I do not claim that this stratum is homogeneous or is an autonomous social group. What I mean by a tendency within this stratum is that these activities and ideas characterise a particular stage within its overall development and although not generally adhered to by the whole stratum are an element in the ideological conditions in which intellectuals live. I do not mean that they are not taken up or adhered to by people who fall outside this category.

There are a couple of immediate difficulties in giving an account of a movement of this sort. First of all, since it is a cultural phenomenon it does not organise itself into a countable body of people like a trades union, a democratic campaigning organisation or a pressure group. We cannot look at a list of affiliations, read its resolutions or its programme, its aims or constitution. It is more difficult to estimate the precise extent of its adherents or the exact class base from which it derives its support. This has to do, of course, with the very nature of the movement itself. Secondly, we cannot trust the definitions which such a movement gives of itself. We cannot take it at face value. An important element in it is the process of masking its actual social relations. After all, the very unity of the movement within the different practices is composed of this assertion that they are an "alternative" to the established "system" and, in some way, stand outside capitalist relations of production.

How the Movement Developed

Many partial accounts have been given of the sources of this development and many of them tend to be a part of this process of self-definition. They range from the effect on the post-war generation of the development and use of nuclear weapons (*Bomb Culture,* Jeff Nuttall), the effect of the development and availability of the contraceptive pill to the effect of the development of the mass electronic media (*Understanding Media* by McCluhan). What many of them have in common is that they relate the effects of technological developments upon people's consciousness without showing how they are mediated by social relationships. Science is presented as an immediate experience as if its development was autonomous from changes within the forces of production and consequent changes in the relations of production. However if we are to analyse the conditions which have given rise to the alternative movement, then it is to the changing class structure wrought by the massive increase in the part played by technological innovations within the process of production during the post-war period that we must address our attention.

This dramatic change in the rate of increase of the constant capital element in the organic composition of capital had its roots in the overall evolution of British state monopoly capitalism which dates back to the period immediately preceding the war. The war had the effect of intensify-

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ing this process. It was attended by an increased centralisation of production, a growth in the rate of increase of productivity, a gradual but significant growth in the production of consumer commodities and an increase in the part played by the state in the management of capitalism. There were consequent changes in the class structure, a relative decrease in the number of workers involved directly in production and a relative increase in the administrative, technical and supervisory sectors (see *Class Structure,* Communist Party pamphlet). These changes were not merely a mechanical outcome of the war but were also determined by the political position of post-war capitalism. The impossibility of a return to the political instability produced by the mass unemployment of the pre-war period, the growing strength of the labour movement, the strong position of the Soviet Union and the advances being made by the socialist economies had to be taken into account.

The demand for trained and educated personnel to fill the technical, administrative and supervisory grades in industry and to man the expanded state bureaucracy necessitated the overall expansion of the higher education system. This expansion was reinforced by the demands of the labour movement for a more egalitarian and accessible education system. It is hardly surprising that the contradictions within the development of this expanded higher education system should have a profound effect on the new intellectual workforce.[1] On the other hand, these contradictions were a reflection of the contradiction between the need to establish a liberal democracy and the profoundly anti-democratic character of state monopoly capitalism. There was the immediate antagonism between the demand for an egalitarian, free, accessible education system which was democratic in its character and the actual needs of capitalism.

This was exacerbated by the fact that this expansion was undertaken on the basis of the liberal, classically-based and class-biased 'Oxbridge' model which did not match the real requirements of capitalist production. In order to resolve these antagonisms it was necessary to expand the arts, social science, humanities and liberal studies courses parallel to the expansion of scientific and technologically-based courses. One consequence of this was the massive relative over-production of arts graduates with no jobs adequate to the level of their training. An example was the experience in Art Colleges where the traditional dominance of Fine Arts contradicted the need for graphic, advertising, packaging and commodity design skills demanded by the expanding consumer commodity market.

Contradictions Experienced

It is characteristic of capitalism that the specific class interests of the ruling class are presented as being the general interests of society as a whole. There is a constant tendency towards the masking of capitalist relations of production. The veiling or mediation of capitalism's interests takes the form of the production of philosophies, ideas and concepts which can render coherent or appear to explain away the contradictions within society. It is particularly upon this process, at a sophisticated level, that the adherence of intellectuals to the prevailing order depends. Behind the veil of 'culture', 'freedom of expression', 'freedom of the individual', 'the development of imagination and creativity' and so on lurks the reality of the rat race and greed for profit. This contradiction between capitalism's liberality and its authoritarianism, between its need for initiative and its demand for servility, between its humanism and its inhumanity, had the effect of permitting or actively cultivating aspirations towards a free, imaginative and creative life while in fact being incapable of fulfilling this promise.

These contradictions were acutely felt by people inside the colleges, art schools and universities. Nothing could explain away the absurdity of a society in which philosophy graduates sold soap for Unilever, literature graduates wrote advertising copy for a particular brand of cigar or social science graduates administered the poverty and inhumanity of Britain's welfare state. They were experienced by a section of the population who were often cut off from their class roots, in a period when the class struggle was constantly limited to economic demands and in a country where, with its small Communist Party, the ideological and political interests of the working class were suppressed.

Under these conditions, there was a tendency for a whole social group to isolate itself both from the ruling class and from the working class in its attempts to grasp its own specific identity. This isolation was constantly in the process of breaking down, particularly because of the growing proletarianisation of the work undertaken by this stratum, the increasing militancy of the 'white collar' unions, the effect of the capitalist crisis and inflation on their material conditions, the clarification of the nature of imperialism especially felt in the impact of the Vietnam war and the growing militancy of the labour movement shown in the confrontation with the Tory government of 1970-74 over the Industrial Relations Act.

However because this stratum was at or close to

[1] See Martin Jacques—*The Universities and Capitalism, Marxism Today,* July 1975.

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the point of production of the ideologies and ideas of capitalist society it was within this sphere that it tended to make its intervention and within which it tended to seek its identity. This manifested itself as a cultural rebellion against bourgeois society which lacked the political and economic transformation which would have made its consummation possible. The isolation of the stratum made it liable to petty bourgeois philosophies, especially the anarchism and utopianism which characterise the alternative culture. With regard to the working class this was expressed as an antagonism towards the economic class struggle, the fight for improved living standards and a distrust, compounded by ignorance, of the trades unions, the Labour Party and the Communist Party.

There was, and is, a tendency to see the aspirations of intellectuals and the expectations of the working class as antithetical and to see in the latter merely another aspect of the greed of the consumer society. The material base of this rebellion was the technological innovations which had taken place within the media which I have already described. This afforded the proponents of the alternative the means by which they could disseminate and cultivate their ideas and activities outside the direct control of the monopoly structure. It was easier under these circumstances to create the appearance of the movement's autonomy from capitalist relations of production. This process was assisted by the high standard of facilities available at the colleges and universities and finance from bodies relatively autonomous from the state apparatus such as the Arts Council, the Urban Aid Development Fund, the British Film Institute, along with liberal charities such as the Gulbenkian Foundation and the Rowntree Trust. Within the media the result, in economic terms, was the proliferation of small-scale production using the tools and instruments made available by the technological advance, while the large-scale means of production, circulation and distribution were increasingly more heavily monopolised.

A description of this length is bound to be schematic and overmechanical. It is important not to lose sight of the real ideological challenge which was offered to the ruling class, in terms of its ideas, its values, its morals, its style, its images and its spectacles, although this was mixed in with often sterile and illusory political philosophies and activities. I would like now to describe some of the more general trends within the movement.

Trend to the Collective

First, there is the tendency towards the collective or group organisation of activities and work. This is seen in the 'commune' movement, in the attempts to abolish the normal divisions of household labours in the theatre, with the abandonment in many groups of the individualised role of the writer and the director and the constitution of the group itself as a collective writer and a collective director; in research and social work organisations such as Law Centres, in a similar abolition of the administrative hierarchy of secretaries and bosses; in psychiatry, in the development of group psychotherapy and critical questioning of the relationship between the role of the therapist and the role of the patient.

This intense questioning of roles within social practice has played both a critical and experimental function. It throws into relief the social division of mental from physical labour. It confronts the authoritarian structures which intertwine with this division or hierarchy of labour. It attacks the individualism so prevalent within the ideological structures of capitalism. As such, within given fields it is a militant form of organisation, in others it performs a creative function. In the 'formal' nature of its attack on bourgeois ideas and structures there is a tendency for the 'collectivity' to become an end in itself. Tied in with utopian ideas it can become a resort for spontaneism, detaching and isolating itself from that which instantaneously it claims to have abolished —capitalist social relations.

It is precisely this illusory act of faith, that capitalism or 'the system' will crumble when its superstructures are attacked, that signifies another tendency within the movement, and that is the tendency to replace politics with culture. The notion that society can be transformed by cultural or ideological struggle rests on the idea that the ruling class maintain their power solely by means of their hold over the people's minds and that its power, to that extent, is an illusion, something in the nature of a massive confidence trick which, if merely exposed, will vanish, or like a delicately structured monolith which, if hit in the right place, will fall like a house of cards.

The Idea of 'Community'

Another trend which has been a strong element in the growing politicalisation of the movement has been the 'community'-based character of the different activities. This has been seen within the media, especially in the community theatre movement, but also it has shown itself in local housing action campaigns, community law centres, community work projects, community newspapers, the organisation of street or community festivals and so on. While opening up new organisational potential for local Communist Party branches, it needs to be clear how work with these local organisations differs from the Liberal Party's notion of 'community politics'. The idea of 'community'

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as such has gained currency as a response to the overcentralisation of political and economic structures. However it often projects a classless, bourgeois, sociological view of social relations. Its appeal to sections of the intellectual stratum is perhaps due to the isolation of which I spoke earlier. It is also very much a current word with institutions such as the Arts Council, the Urban Aid Development Fund and liberal charities like the Gulbenkian Foundation, which often finance these local organisations and a part of whose function it is, to paper over the devastation wreaked by monopoly capitalism in the quality of peoples' social and cultural relations.

The contradiction within this development is that proposed quite correctly is the need for a grass roots response to the erosion of democratic control and the alienation of people from the political and economic structure, while the class nature of social, political and economic relations are covered over, thereby preventing fundamental questions about the relationships of ownership and control being asked.

Within the media, the movement towards 'community' involvement is, of course, a direct response to the overcentralisation of cultural institutions and to the mass media dominated by the monopolies. It represents an attempt to find an alternative means of distribution and also to create a closer more participatory relationship between producers and consumers. This aspiration towards more participatory relationships in the production of theatre and community newspapers and so on, is both an effect of and a motivation behind the tendency towards decentralisation but also has to do with the quality of the products or productions themselves. Implicitly it criticises the notion of the 'active' producer and the 'passive' consumer. As such it challenges the stultifying division within capitalism between work and play. Within the faltering, often misdirected activities which have arisen out of these aspirations, the lineaments of a cultural transformation can be discerned.

The general nature of capitalism's crisis, characterised by the contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production, applies specifically to the nature of its cultural and ideological crisis. Capitalism has produced the means for the fulfilment of the imaginative and creative aspirations of the masses of the people, for a massive extension and cultivation of human ingenuity, and yet it is precisely its domination and control of those means which are used to repress, cripple and hold back this development.

I have pointed out what I think are certain dangers in some of the general features of the movement. However, what their emergence might signify is the growing complexity of the ideological crisis within our society. For it is not simply that the protagonists of the alternative have become irked by the massive cultural machine of capitalism but that the means employed by the ruling class to gain the consent of the masses of the people to its power have grown in their sophistication and to a large extent their effectiveness. Nevertheless the more deeply capitalism is wracked by its economic crisis, the more reliance it places on these means and the more it needs to use them in an openly coercive manner. The more this happens, the more the disjuncture between the specific class interests of the ruling class and the general interests of society becomes apparent and the use of these means to gain consent become less effective.

The veil of impartiality becomes increasingly transparent, exposing the naked class rule of monopoly capital. Unable to explain away or render coherent its own contradictions, caught between its long-term and short-term interests, between the strategy to gain consent for its rule and its strategy of force and coercion, capitalism resorts to conundrums, illogicalities and mysticism. It can no longer rely on the adherence of intellectuals and turns upon this stratum with increasing authoritarianism. The ability of the ruling class to organise itself at this level, based on its ownership and control of the mass media and other institutions, is a mainstay of its power. This ability directly impairs the ability of the working class to organise itself at this level. It is in this respect, surely, that Gramsci's concept of hegemony in relation to the different levels of class organisation and consciousness is so rich in its political consequences.

Strategy for Struggle

Certain questions are raised: is there a coherent strategy for this level of struggle while the monopolies exercise their direct control over the mass media and cultural institutions? Is this ability to organise *simply* determined by economic control? Both the overall consciousness and the technical innovations which are intertwined with the development of the alternative media help to give us a basis from which to answer these questions. For the struggle against capitalist ideas cannot, of course, be conducted by merely 'switching off' the television or by 'not reading' the capitalist press nor can it be carried forward merely by demands for democratic control of the mass media, although this is a vital part of the struggle. Furthermore it is a struggle which spans and overlaps with the revolutionary transformation of political and economic relations. It can no more be deferred until after this transformation has taken place than can the struggle against sexist attitudes and behaviour.

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An acute consciousness of the effects of the mass media certainly plays an important part within the alternative movement. This has been shown by the attempts in certain protest movements and campaigns to subvert the use made by the establishment of the media. This is the case in many examples of direct action where the actual success of the operation depends on its spectacular nature and the coverage it gets.

The tactic of creating an alternative spectacle has in many instances been raised to the level of a strategy when the objective of the action has been momentarily to destroy the charade of bourgeois society, to puncture the illusion of capitalist power or to confront western society with its own destructiveness and inhumanity. Examples of this were the attempt by the *Yippees* (Youth International Party) to discredit and create an alternative spectacle to the Republican Party Convention in Chicago in 1968 or the deliberate and conscious use made of the media during the Centre Point occupation in London at the beginning of 1974. It is interesting in this respect to look at the targets chosen by the *Angry Brigade*: houses of Tory Cabinet Ministers, the BBC outside broadcast unit at the Miss World contest and Biba's boutique in Kensington High Street. This consciousness of the effect of the images which are created and purveyed through the media has a general significance.

The response to this within the Communist Party is often posed in terms of a change in the *style* of the Party's work. Of course it is true that how the Party appears, the image that it creates for itself, or that is created for it, is of vital importance. However, the reason why I would express the question as one of organisation is to avoid the notion that the way the Party appears is merely a question of appearance. The conditions of which this consciousness is both a part and an index calls for, not a change in direction, but a broadening and an enriching of the Party's concept of organisation and of its organisational capacity.

This calls into question the emphasis given by the party to its cultural policies and its cultural practice within its overall political strategy. This emphasis has a direct significance in terms of the party's appeal to intellectuals (see *For the Advancement of Culture*—Roland Leroy and Georges Marchais, *Marxism Today*, July 1975). It also has to do with the development and organisation of working class power or hegemony, especially in an advanced industrial society. The ability to organise more extensively and in a more sophisticated way, using, for example, theatre, film videotape, technically more effective graphic material, and the organisation of events with a cultural content has been opened up by the technical innovations mentioned. However, the development of this organisational capacity involves the recognition that a cultural policy cannot be limited solely to demands for democratic control of the mass media and cultural institutions, unless our view of what that democratic process involves is not only economic control or ownership and not only an increase in the *quantity* of theatre, art, music, literature and their extended accessibility, but also a profound *qualitative* upheaval.

The analogy that I would draw here is with the lesson which Marx gleaned from events around the Paris Commune of 1871 when he wrote: 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purpose'.[2] Talking about the relationship between bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy Lenin reiterates in *State and Revolution* that "the winning of the battle of democracy" by "the proletariat organised as the ruling class" is exactly a case of "quantity being transformed into quality". The ideological struggle involves profound democratic issues. The broadening of the Communist Party's organisational capacity in this way can, in turn, only strengthen the ability of the working class to organise the consent of the masses to its power and can only assist in the struggle for socialism.

Towards an Assessment

I have mentioned the difficulties involved in making an assessment of the alternative media and the alternative movement in general. What I have tried to do is to assess what these phenomena signify about the nature of our society and to disentangle the technical innovations from the philosophies which have surrounded them. It is true that many of the more vital and important developments have outgrown the philosophies of the alternative, as such, and have ditched the utopian, idealist and anarchistic myths which have enshrouded their birth. It is clear that certain of these developments like the radical movement in law and the setting up of Community Law Centres are politically more important than the fashion for macrobiotic cooking (see *Alternative Cooking*, Tandem). The tendencies towards utopianism, idealism and anarchism are, however, still factors with the different practices even with the increasing politicisation of the intellectual stratum. The influence there of ultra-leftism is an indication of this.

There are many general tendencies which I have not touched upon like the appeal for intellectuals of the 'third world' struggles and also the effects

[2] *Civil War in France.*

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of the massive anti-soviet onslaught by the ruling class directed for important strategic reasons towards this stratum. I have chosen not to touch upon the massive and profound influence of the Women's Liberation Movement within the developments which I have described.

In attempting to evaluate a movement as a whole, there is a danger of trying to separate those elements which might appear to be progressive in content from those aspects which seem backward and reactionary and in so doing risk separating the phenomenon as a whole from the changing social conditions which have given rise to it. The contradiction within cultural movements is often between the aspirations of certain social strata and the forms in which these aspirations express themselves. In these instances it is a case of having to look at the overall conditions of which they are a reflection to see how the specific interests of these strata relate to the general interests of the working class and the struggle for socialism. As for the use of the technical innovations in the media which have accompanied the development of the alternative movement, they can only serve to enrich and strengthen the propaganda and publicity work of the party.

Document:

A Historical Analysis of the Cuban Revolution (Part I)

Fidel Castro

(We print below, slightly abbreviated, the first section of the opening speech made by Fidel Castro, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, on December 17, 1975, at the First Congress of the Party, held at the Karl Marx Theatre, Havana. The other sections of his speech were on Economic Development; Social Development; The New Constitution; Politico-Administrative Division; The Mass and Social Organisations; The Ministry of the Interior; The Young Communist League; The Party; Foreign Policy; and Work in the Coming Years. The subheads are ours.)

Cuba was Spain's last colony in Latin America, and is now the first socialist country in this hemisphere. In order to accomplish this unique historical mission, our country had to overcome obstacles which at times appeared to be insurmountable.

When in the early years of the last century the great majority of Spanish-speaking peoples took the path of emancipation from the colonial yoke, in the favourable circumstances created by the Napoleonic invasion of Spain, Cuba was a country of tropical plantations worked by slave labour. It was then a typically slave-holding society. In defiance of the many international agreements of the time, the number of slaves increased from year to year with the growth of the material wealth and prosperity of the ruling classes. Both commerce and administration were dominated by the Spaniards; rich Cubans owned the plantations.

This social class, although having an interest in overcoming the colonial obstacles which hindered the development of the economy and its access to political power, could not do without the military force of the metropolis in order to keep slaves in submission. They feared a repetition in Cuba of Haiti's heroic history, and without hesitation subordinated the question of national independence to its interests as a slave-owning class. In 1841, those who were subjected to this terrible form of exploitation numbered more than 400,000 in a population of just over one million.

For that reason, although our country came to be regarded by the Spanish monarchy as the "always loyal Island of Cuba", this class interest also generated, within a section of the rich Cubans, the baneful trend towards annexation by the United States, because, among other reasons, they feared that Spain itself would give in to international pressures and abolish slavery. This trend was strongly supported by the slave-holding states in the South of the USA, in their conflict of interests with the industrial states of the North, and in their hope of having another slave-holding state on the Island of Cuba. . . .

First War for Independence

The first war for independence in 1868, even though started and led by Cuban patriots from wealthy families, possessing the political culture, the contacts and the economic resources for such a task, did not, nevertheless, begin or reach

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explosive or mass force in the provinces where the slave-holding class had the deepest roots, where it was most powerful, and where it had greatest interests, that is, the western part of Cuba, but did so only in the country's regions and provinces where there were a greater number of independent peasants and where slave labour was comparatively of lesser economic importance. . . .

Although Spanish repression affected all Cubans equally, regardless of their social class, the West —where the main wealth of the slave-holding class was concentrated—kept aloof from the war and supplied the colonial army with its resources. The main burden in the war fell upon the poorest sections of the people, who in an unequal and incomparably heroic struggle carried on the fight for ten years before being defeated, due more to divisions and intrigues than to enemy arms. It was then that Antonio Maceo, a man who had emerged from the poorest sections, rejected the cease-fire peace without independence and became the symbol of our people's spirit and indomitable will to fight on when he issued his immortal Protest of Baragua.

Shortly after 1886, slavery was abolished, among other reasons, as an inevitable sequel to the Ten Years' War. Thus, we were the last country in the hemisphere in which this baneful institution was officially suppressed. Men and women who experienced slavery are still alive in this country.

Under the Leadership of Martí

In 1895, the Cubans were again up in arms. This time the struggle had been politically prepared through the course of long years. Under the leadership of Martí, whose political genius went beyond the boundaries of his country and his epoch, a party was organised to lead the revolution. This idea, which Lenin simultaneously developed to carry out the socialist revolution in the old Empire of the czars, is one of Martí's most admirable contributions to political thought. A single revolutionary party was set up in our country. This party brought together the glorious veterans of the Ten Years' War, symbolised by Gómez and Maceo, with new generations of peasants, workers, artisans and intellectuals, in order to carry out the revolution in Cuba.

Martí came to know the monster because he lived in its entrails. He knew of the monster's old urges to take possession of Cuba by means of the expansionist policy of "manifest destiny" now supplemented with the new imperial tendency resulting from capitalist development in the United States, a tendency that Martí discerned with amazing clarity:

> "I am already in daily danger of giving my life for my country and as my duty—because I am fully aware of it and am fully determined to do so—of preventing in time, by Cuba's independence, that the United States should expand through the Antilles and pounce with that added strength on our lands of America. Everything that I have done up to now and will do in the future shall be done for this purpose. It has to be in silence and as though indirectly, because there are things that to be attained have to be concealed and that, if proclaimed for what they are, could raise difficulties too unyielding to be surmounted to the end."

This was said by Martí on the eve of his death as he fought alongside the men of the Liberation Army on the fields of Cuba. It is in this thought and in Lenin's definition and interpretation of the Spanish-American war as the first imperialist war, that two men from two distinct historical settings and two converging ideas—José Martí and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin—clasp hands. The one is a symbol of national liberation from colonial domination and imperialism; the other, the architect of the first socialist revolution in the weakest link of the imperialist chain: national liberation and socialism, two closely interwoven causes in the modern world. Both with a solid and disciplined party to carry forward revolutionary aims; both founded almost simultaneously at the turn of the century.

Without resources, without supplies, without logistics, with a population of barely one and a half million, the people of Cuba fought against 300,000 colonial troops. At the time, Spain was one of the leading military powers of Europe. No other people of America had to carry on the struggle for independence in such hard and difficult conditions. Cuba was the Vietnam of the end of the last century. The Cuban people carried on the struggle with their own forces, without the participation of any other Latin-American state, and in the face of the active hostility of the US government to the efforts of the Cuban emigrés seeking to supply arms to their fighting compatriots. Men of other fraternal peoples, who came of their own free will to fight for our homeland's freedom, did take an active part in the struggle for our independence. A symbol of all of these men was Máximo Gómez, an outstanding representative of the Dominican people, who became Commander-in-Chief of our army. These men inscribed brilliant pages of international solidarity into our country's history on the fields of Cuba.

US Intervention

Spain was exhausted, without resources or energy to continue the war. The Spanish army controlled only the major strongholds. The revolu-

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tionaries dominated the whole countryside and the inland communications. Many famous Spanish generals were routed in the war. It was then, in 1898, that US military intervention took place, but not before preliminary attempts, on the eve of the launching of hostilities, to buy the territory of Cuba from Spain. If the stubbornness of Spain ever did render Cuba a kind of service, it was through the systematic refusals to agree to such a transaction, which the United States had repeatedly proposed to Spain in the past century.

The imperialist war ended with the occupation of Cuba, the Philippines and Puerto Rico. Cuba's struggle aroused broad sympathy throughout the world and also the US people itself. Its heroic struggle commanded respect even among the ambitious foreign conquerors, and the island could not immediately be annexed. On May 20, 1902, it was granted formal independence with US naval bases and also with a constitutional amendment, imposed by the United States, which, among other things, gave the United States the right to intervene in Cuba. Thus, a Yankee neocolony was established in our country. The Philippines was occupied right up to 1946. Today, it is an independent nation, but with 18 US bases on its territory. Puerto Rico remains occupied, with dozens of bases on its territory; the United States has been shamelessly trying to incorporate it in its territory as yet another one of its states. It was a great, heroic and fortunate course of history that spared our country and our people of the terrible destiny of being absorbed by the United States. This was due essentially to the firm resolve of its sons, and to the rivers of blood they shed to uphold their nationality.

One clear fact stands out in the history of our country in the past century and in the present, in the colonial and the neocolonial period, before and after the wars of independence. This is the lesson that the exploiting classes of our country and the United States were always a powerful obstacle to Cuba's liberation.

In 1902, the country simply had a change of master. The fine Liberation Army was dissolved. Sell-out governments and plunderous economic treaties were imposed on our country. The occupation forces set up a mercenary army. The most rotten and reactionary sections of colonial society were advanced to the forefront by their close alliance with US interests. They were open advocates of Cuba's permanent occupation by the United States.

Cuba's first president, Tomás Estrada Palma, installed by imperialism, was an outspoken annexationist. In 1906, he asked for a second intervention by the US armed forces. On October 10 of that year he wrote: "I have never been afraid to admit, and I do not fear saying this openly, that a political dependence assuring us the great blessing of liberty is a hundred times more preferable for our beloved Cuba than a sovereign and independent republic discredited and ruined by the pernicious action of constant civil wars."

Reformed and Dependent Economy

US investments in Cuba, totalling 50 million dollars in 1896, went up to 160 million in 1906, to 205 million in 1911, and 1,200 million in 1923, which included the ownership of three-quarters of the sugar industry.

The corrupt governments and the repeated Yankee interventions in the first few decades of the neocolonialised republic did their job of handing over the country's wealth to foreign masters. The best farmland, the largest sugar mills, the mineral deposits, the basic industries, the railroads, the banks, the public services and foreign trade passed into the iron grip of US monopoly capital. The results of the heroic battles of 1868 and 1895 were thwarted. The valiant rebel people, who had amazed the world by their patriotic exploits, were forced to go on living as a pariah in their own land.

The peasants, most of whom had fought in the ranks of the Liberation Army, did not receive the land which they had abundantly drenched with their blood; instead, new latifundia appeared alongside the old ones, frequently consisting of the parcels of land that had once belonged to those who had died or had fought for independence. For a ridiculous price, by means of fraud, evictions or simply concessions, Yankee enterprises or members of the oligarchy allied with imperialism became owners of vast tracts of land. That was the start of the tragic history of infinite suffering, which US domination imposed on the peasants for over 50 years.

The economy grew deformed and absolutely dependent on US interest. Our country was converted into a supplier of sugar at low prices, a reliable reserve of supplies in the event of war and yet another market for US surplus financial resources, and farm and industrial products.

The new plantations required cheap and abundant labour; the population was scarce and there was a shortage of hands. Immigrants began to be imported from Haiti and Jamaica. The inhuman conditions in which they lived, huddled in barracks and rural communities, with miserable wages, deprived of any medical care, of the most elementary rights and of any protection against their exploiters, constitute one of the saddest and most disgraceful pages in the history of capitalism in Cuba. Slavery, which had but recently—in 1886—

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been abolished, was being revived in new and even worse forms by the pseudo-republic.

Foreign Domination

The most incredible corruption became commonplace in public administration. Political factions in the service of foreign interests distributed among themselves the sinecures and administrative offices. Thousands of false payrolls supported the agents and political machines of the parties in power. Funds earmarked for public works, public education and public health were scandalously squandered. Poverty, illiteracy and disease were rife throughout the country. The repressive bodies brutally suppressed any expression of protest on the part of the workers, peasants or students. Brutal repression ruled all the sugar enterprises, rural communities and the rest of the countryside. The whole apparatus of coercion, the Administration, the Parliament and the Judiciary existed for the sole purpose of serving the Yankee monopolists, the landowners and the bourgeoisie. Prostitution and gambling flourished everywhere. Racial discrimination, which should have been wiped out for ever by virtue of the common blood shed on the battlefields by a people who had so heroically fought for freedom and justice, became especially acute with US domination in Cuba. In the parks of many cities one could observe the disgraceful sight of blacks and whites divided into separate areas. Many educational, economic, cultural and recreational institutions were barred to black citizens, denying them the right to study, work and culture, and, what is most important, denying them human dignity.

Women, who had displayed incomparable proof of self-sacrifice and revolutionary capability in the struggle for independence, were compelled to live in conditions of social and legal inferiority. There was no protection for motherhood, and children could be given the humiliating designation of being "natural" or "illegitimate". Capitalist economic crises hit the country with tremendous force, and in every case the USA made Cuba experience the worst effects. Our foreign policy was made in Washington. On the maps of the world, Cuba was presented in the same colour as the United States. Most US citizens would have been surprised to hear that we were not an official possession of the United States, and Yankee ambassadors, actual pro-consuls, arrogantly gave orders to our rulers.

Yankee capitalism added, to all the vices inherited by Cuba from the colonial period, its own vices, and with them its modes of thinking, its frenzied selfishness, its customs, its entertainments, its propaganda, its way of life, and—even worse—its reactionary political ideology. Complete master of the mass media, it made full use of them to distort and crush our national culture, suppress patriotic feelings, shape political thinking and promote a cult of the United States. Schoolchildren were taught that the United States was a generous liberator of our homeland. The heroic epoch was followed by humiliation and ignominy. What Martí had so yearned to avoid with his constant teachings and brilliant foresight, was exactly what happened in the years that followed our wars for independence.

The Platt Amendment, with its imposed constitutional clause, giving the United States the legal right to armed intervention in Cuba in the event of any breach of the established order, weighed heavily on the hearts of Cuban patriots. The revolutionary armed struggle could directly lead to the military occupation by a nation much more powerful than Spain. Cuba was much too weak to resist such a power single-handed. The risk of losing all independence was bound to have a paralysing effect on revolutionary action. And although political factions did resort to arms more than once to settle their scores, thereby instigating Yankee intervention, this explains why there was no continuity in the revolutionary process in the early decades of the century.

From National to Social Revolution

Our struggle was inevitably losing its purely national character and possibilities, and was linking its fate with the world revolutionary movement. It was impossible for an isolated, weak and small country alone to resist domination by the richest and most powerful imperialist power. At the same time, the content of our Revolution, which under the colonial system could not transcend the limits of a national liberation movement, inspired by liberal principles of the past century, had to move towards a social revolution as capitalism developed and the working class emerged in the country. To the task of liberating the nation from imperialist domination was inevitably now added the task of eliminating the exploitation of man by man in our society. Both objectives were already an inseparable part of our historical process, because the capitalist system, which oppressed us as a nation from outside, oppressed and exploited us as working people at home, while the social force capable of emancipating the country from internal oppression, that is, the working people themselves, was the only force capable of supporting us externally against the imperialist power oppressing our country.

To have become aware of this, is, we believe, a supreme historical achievement of Baliño and Mella, who, in 1925, with a handful of men, formed the first Marxist-Leninist Party in Cuba.

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The glorious October Revolution of 1917, which inspired those valiant champions of the Socialist Revolution, was an event that was subsequently to play a decisive role in our country's destiny. Only with the invincible strength of the international working class was our small country able to counter the mortal danger which stemmed from the political, economic and military might of the United States, and only thanks to the strategy, principles and ideology of the working class and with that class in the van, was our Revolution capable of advancing to the country's final national liberation and social emancipation.

In the '30s, at the time of our people's heroic struggles against the Machado tyranny, our working class, led by the Communists, was already playing an outstanding role.

A terrible famine, a result of the world economic crisis, struck our population; a price of even less than one centavo was being paid for a pound of sugar, and US custom tariffs on our basic export product were dealing our weakened economy merciless blows. Social evils increased extraordinarily. In these conditions political repression reached an extreme intensity: workers, peasants, students, journalists and intellectuals prominent in the struggle were brutally assassinated by henchmen of the tyranny. Mella was cowardly shot in Mexico City. This was a period in which the revolutionary consciousness of the masses grew especially. Anti-imperialist sentiments acquired great force, and the whole system was in crisis.

The Government of the United States intervened through what is called "mediation", deploying its battleships off Cuba. In August 1933 the Machado government, unable to stand up to the pressure of the revolutionary general strike, was overthrown. It was succeeded by a faceless and motley government, a product of Yankee intervention.

Nonconformism, discontent and revolutionary teachings penetrated the barracks. On September 4 the soldiers and sergeants rose up in contact with the students and other revolutionary circles. A provisional revolutionary government of nationalist orientation was formed, appreciably influenced by the anti-imperialist wing led by Antonio Guiteras. Along with certain progressive measures, a number of openly inhuman steps were taken, such as the forcible repatriation of thousands of Haitian immigrants. Revolutionary soviets were set up at some of the sugar mills. All this was done despite the menacing presence of Yankee warships.

In the Thirties

The country was going through a genuine period of revolutionary convulsion. But again imperialism, not needing to resort to direct military intervention, acting in complicity with the reactionary class and taking advantage of the shameful perfidy of Fulgencio Batista, a militarist leader who had appeared on the scene on September 4, frustrated the revolutionary process, which was put down by fire and sword. In March 1934, the revolutionary strike was brutally suppressed, and in May 1935, with the assassination of Antonio Guiteras, the last vestiges of armed resistance were eliminated.

Nevertheless, the heroic efforts of the '30s had an extraordinary influence on our country's life. The Platt Amendment was repealed as a result of our people's energetic struggle during that period. And although the United States in practice reserved the right to intervene in any Latin-American republic, this ominous and humiliating clause was removed from our Constitution.

A period of uncertainty followed. The world economy was gradually recovering. The tide of revolution was receding, and Batista was able to consolidate his rule for long years.

On the international plane, the dark clouds of fascism had been gathering since the '20s, a consequence of the disastrous imperialist policy of suppressing revolution in Europe, a policy of aggression, of isolating and liquidating the first socialist state, founded by Lenin and the heroic Russian Communists. . . .

The international revolutionary movement was concentrating its attention on combating fascism. In 1936 a civil war broke out in Spain, where the enemies of the republic had mutinied with the backing of Hitler and Mussolini. The International Brigades went into action, their struggle inscribing one of the finest pages into the history of proletarian internationalism. Our people sent nearly a thousand combatants to Spain to fight fascism. We shall never forget that men of the calibre and human stature of Pablo de la Torriente Brau generously laid down their lives there without hesitation. We consider that our first Communist Party, which inspired this solidarity action, thereby made one of its noblest and most heroic contributions to the world revolutionary movement.

In Cuba the revolutionary forces had been profoundly divided since 1933. Batista was astutely manoeuvring. In the international atmosphere of the time, with its growing contradiction between North American imperialism and Hitler Germany, with the powerful anti-fascist feeling all over the world and the Popular Front policy, he promoted tactical alliances with the left and made certain political concessions to the labour unions. Nonetheless, the régime did not lose its distinctly militarist-bourgeois and pro-imperialist character.

The profoundly anti-Communist spirit of the forces led by Grau, who headed an important sector of the opposition to the régime, impeded the establishment of unity among the popular forces

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and contributed to creating a chaotic political situation.

World War II

World War II broke out in 1939. The bourgeois régimes in Europe, which were patronising fascism's ambitions, were incapable of resisting Hitler's bestial hordes.

Their morale undermined, they collapsed, their armies surrendered and almost the whole of Europe, with its enormous industrial and human potential, fell into the hands of the aggressors.

Then came the aggressive attack on the USSR; millions of soldiers were thrown into the onslaught. Fascism had always dreamed of eliminating the bulwark of the revolution in the world and wiping off the face of the earth the heroic people who had forged the first socialist state. That is how it planned to establish a millenium of domination. Thus began a struggle that was to be decisive for the destiny of mankind. But the Soviet people resisted, their soldiers fought heroically on every front. For the first time, fascism came up against unyielding opposition. At the cost of infinite sacrifice and the lives of 20 million sons, they destroyed the aggressors, saving Lenin's homeland and freeing Europe and the world from a terrible fate. The patriots of the occupied countries and the fighters of numerous nations likewise made a valuable contribution to the common victory.

The socialist camp emerged, dozens of countries were freed from colonialism and a broad road was opened up for the world revolutionary movement.

Nevertheless, the world could not look forward to an era of peaceful co-operation. Imperialism was still very powerful and had not drawn the proper conclusions from Hitler's lesson. The United States, which ended the war with its industrial power intact and its coffers filled with gold, became the stronghold of world reaction, taking over for fascism in its counter-revolutionary crusade and in the role of international gendarme. It put into effect a broad policy of establishing military alliances against the socialist camp, ringed the USSR with strategic bases, propped up the most reactionary governments everywhere, promoted subversion against progressive countries, unleashed the arms race and inaugurated the disgraceful cold-war period. In Cuba, where the Communists had considerably increased their ranks and exercised the direction of a powerful labour movement, this imperialist policy made itself felt most forcefully.

A new Constitution had been passed in 1940, its text recording some of the victories scored in the 1930s and other additional demands of the popular movement, though many of its provisions remained a dead letter for lack of the supplementary laws which were never enacted. From there on, the political process followed something of an institutional course.

In 1944, Batista's opponents won the elections, and Grau San Martin was elected president. This government, the product of an election won by a large majority, which had aroused popular hopes, became one of the greatest frustrations for our people. Its policy swiftly became reactionary. From 1946 onwards, it set itself the task of wresting from the Communists the leadership of the trade union movement. It used every means to this end. The entire state apparatus was placed at the disposal of a clique of corrupt leaders. When the fraudulent methods proved to be inadequate, they resorted to attacks on the trade unions and to brute force.

This period coincided with the cold war. Anti-Communism became unusually virulent. All the mass media were placed at the service of Yankee McCarthyism. Communists were fired from their jobs and harassed by every possible means. Parallel with this, an overt policy of catering for the employers' and imperialists' interests was conducted. At the level of public administration, where tax collection increased as a result of the relatively high sugar prices, theft, corruption and embezzlement reached unprecedented levels; new millionaires emerged overnight. The bourgeois press contributed to the prevailing confusion by its demagogy and its exaltation of false political values. Anarchy, chaos and violence were rampant. At the closing stage of this régime, the dedicated, militant and exemplary leader of the sugar workers, Jesús Menéndez, was treacherously assassinated. His funeral was the occasion for an impressive popular demonstration.

Eduardo Chibás

During this period, a civilian political movement, led by Eduardo Chibás, came into being, capitalising on national discontent and drawing in considerable masses of the young and other sections of the people.

The pro-government candidate, Carlos Prío Socarrás, won the 1948 elections, backed by all the resources of a régime in power. His government continued the robbery and corrupt practices of the ruling clique. The policy of assaulting the trade unions continued. Many Communist workers' leaders were murdered in cold blood. The anti-Communist campaign attained extraordinary force. It was intended to send troops to the Korean War, but this proved impossible because of the people's resistance. Military pacts were signed with the United States. The sell-out to imperialism was complete.

The so-called *auténtico* governments reflected

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the deep crisis gripping our political institutions. Representative democracy and bourgeois parliamentarism were absolutely incapable of solving the country's grave problems. To the contrary, they aggravated them.

Chibás committed suicide and died on August 16, 1951. The political movement he founded commanded remarkable popular support, but in many parts of the country its leadership was already in the hands of traditional politicians and landowners. Nevertheless, it had valuable elements of the people among its ranks, who later played an important role in the fight against Batista's tyranny. Its mass was potentially revolutionary, but it lacked proper leadership. With ample popular support, including that of the Communists, victory in the 1952 elections was assured. This in itself would bring about no social changes in the country, but it did open up future possibilities for action by revolutionaries. A large part of the people were in its ranks: the petty bourgeoisie and also the poor, even though many, influenced by ceaseless imperialist propaganda and even prejudiced against Communism, but disgusted with the existing situation and victims of oppression and exploitation—whose causes they did not yet completely understand—longed for fundamental changes in the country's life. With the exception of the most conscious sections of the proletariat, that is, the Communists, and a part of the organised workers, our poor and exploited, though discontented and determined to fight against prevailing oppression, were not clearly conscious of the social roots of the drama they were going through. The problem to be strategically solved was to lead that great mass along the road of true revolution, which certainly could not be institutional. This was perfectly understood and envisaged by the group of men who later organised the armed insurrectional struggle.

The Batista Coup

The fatal military coup occurred on March 10, 1952. Batista, who had abandoned power in 1944 and had carried away with him tens of thousands of pesos, had left the same mercenary army in the garrisons which had benefited from innumerable sinecures and had served him for 11 years. That was the Republic's army, founded by the Yankees during their first military occupation, that which had carried out numerous repressive measures against the people, that which the mutinous sergeants in 1933 had turned into a pliable tool of a military chief who had kept it at the unconditional service of US imperialist interest. It was the army that all through the years had defended the big-time interests of imperialism and the national oligarchy in our fields, sugar mills and cities.

This mercenary army played a major role in the evictions of peasants, in the massacres of workers, in the prevailing atmosphere of terror in which the country had lived during the years of the imperialist oligarchic dictatorship ever since the very beginnings of the Republic. The soldiers, sergeants and officers made up the praetorian guard at the service of the big landowners, and sugar-mill and industrial owners. The interests of the US monopolies were naturally being protected above all. This apparatus of terror in the hands of oppressors was an enormous obstacle to the country's socio-political development. This army, trained and equipped by the United States, was a force that many considered invincible. Designed as an instrument for the people's repression, this army was completely incapable of safeguarding the country's sovereignty, but it was feared inside the country as the armed guardian of the established social system.

In the midst of the chaos, with the civilian governments discredited and morally corrupt, it proved easy for Batista, who was always quick to do Washington's bidding and who desperately craved for power, to infiltrate into the Columbia Headquarters, to talk to his men and once again to become the country's master, with the all-round support of imperialism and the national oligarchy, who were worried by the nation's political development. The demoralised government of embezzlers fled the country without putting up any resistance, abandoning the people to their unhappy fate. Once again, tanks and bayonets became the arbiter of national policy.

The military coup and Batista's return to power meant profound humiliation for the people, wrested from their hands the June 1 political decision, cut short the institutional course initiated in 1940, and aggravated the nation's ills. The people were totally unarmed in the face of these developments. The clique of corrupt trade union leaders of the overthrown government immediately sided with the winner, the bourgeois press supported the new government, and an unbridled repressive and violent régime was established in our homeland.

The traditional parties and leaders were totally incapable of putting up any resistance to the reactionary military dictatorship. In the meantime, the country's social problems were aggravated as a result of the growth of the population and the under-development of an economy that had been stagnant for over 30 years. The reserve army of labour consisted of 600,000 unemployed, partly used in suger-cane harvesting, in a country where during the first decades of the century the cane

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was cut and the land cultivated largely by immigrant labour; tens of thousands of peasants paid rents or lived as sharecroppers on the lands claimed by the latifundists; the working class was ruthlessly exploited; illiteracy, unhygienic conditions, poverty, abuse, embezzlement, gambling, prostitution and vice were rife everywhere.

At that time, bourgeois and pro-imperialist ideology prevailed on the political scene. Anti-Communism, at the height of the cold war, called the tune in all the mass media, ranging from the radio, television and the cinema, to the press, magazines and books.

Although there was a militant and dedicated detachment of Cuban Communists, the bourgeoisie and imperialism managed to isolate them politically. All bourgeois parties, without exception, refused any kind of understanding with the Communists. Imperialism totally dominated our national policy. Such was the state of the country on the eve of July 26, 1953.

The true people—the workers, peasants, students and the middle strata—lacked the weapons and resources to confront the tyranny; it was necessary to find a way out. The army, wielding all the power, supplied and trained by the United States, was master of the situation. How could an unarmed people break up this complex of forces and, once and for all, establish its social and national rights, which had been frustrated so many times throughout its history?

Revolutionary Forces

The political parties ousted from power had millions of pesos in misappropriated money and some weapons, but lacked the morale and the will to fight. The former opposition parties lacked the means, the leaders and the strategy for a struggle. By itself, the Marxist-Leninist Party had neither the means, nor the strength, nor the required national and international conditions to carry out an armed insurrection. In the conditions prevailing in Cuba at the time, this would have been a useless holocaust.

But no matter how complex a social and political situation may seem, there is always a way out. When the objective conditions for revolution exist, certain subjective factors can play an important role in the events. That is what happened in our country.

In practice, a way to fight a modern army had to be found. Some adopted as their banner the reactionary theory that a revolution could be carried out with or without the army, but never against the army: this would have paralysed any revolutionary action in our country.

The idea of beginning the struggle in Oriente province arose from the consideration of the militant traditions of its population, the terrain, the geography of the country, the distance from the capital and from the bulk of the repressive forces that would be forced to travel over long distances; for all this the weapons had to be taken from the enemy's arsenals in that province. Military action would be accompanied with an attempt to rouse the people by staging a revolutionary general strike, but at that time it was necessary to envisage the possibility of a withdrawal into the mountains and the beginning of an irregular war, valuable experience of which abounds in the history of our independence struggles. That was the embryo of the idea that was in fact carried out later on from the Sierra Maestra. Military action and the social and mass struggle were closely linked together conceptually from the very beginning.

The sustained teachings, the lessons and the example of the Communists, initiated in the glorious days of Baliño and Mella in the burning wake of the victorious October Revolution, had contributed to spreading Marxist-Leninist thought, so that it became an attractive and unique doctrine for many young people rising to political consciousness. Revolutionary books and literature again played a role in historical events. With time, the people themselves were to discover the profound truth of the doctrine of Marx, Engels and Lenin. Meanwhile, the task of new revolutionary elements was to interpret and to apply it to the specific and concrete conditions of our country. This was and had to be the task of new Communists, simply because they were not known as such and did not have to suffer in our society, riddled with prejudice and imperialist police controls, the terrible isolation and seclusion forced upon the selfless revolutionary fighters of our first Communist Party.

(To be completed in our next issue)

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On the Death of Paolo Pasolini

Renzo Galeotti

Renzo Galeotti was born in Carrara 35 years ago. He is a painter with many one-man shows in England and in Italy. His political characterisations have appeared in Italian papers, including Rinascita *of the Italian Communist Party. He has illustrated a number of our articles and a painting of his was reproduced on the cover of our July 1975 issue. We print below a drawing done by him after Pasolini's death.*

There is a curious almost fateful analogy between the death of Pier Paolo Pasolini and that of his brother, Guido Pasolini, a member of the Italian resistance movement during the last war; Guido, a partisan who was killed by his fellow partisans in February 1945. Pier Paolo Pasolini, the poet of the sub-proletariat, which he saw as a redeeming force, and as the eventual liberator from Bourgeois Values, was killed by one of the same sub-proletariat.[1]

The death of his brother was the first great trauma in the life of the poet, but he did not accept it passively. Whenever he encountered tragedy, adversity or happiness in his life, it was like a "combustion" for his work and for the "desperate vitality" of a man who was rarely happy.

In the turmoil of the immediate post-war period, Pasolini was acutely aware of the problem of the class struggle, consequently he became a member of the Communist Party, finding a political answer and emotional identification.

Elements of Contradiction

Despite the fact that he read much of Marx and Gramsci to whom he dedicated his most famous collection of poems, *Le Ceneri di Gramsci* (1957), he was never an orthodox Marxist. His was an existential Communist rather than a scientific one; and full of personal contradictions. These contradictions he believed, if channelled and understood, permitted the affirmation of the personality.

Man must follow both his reason, and his passions and feelings. These are, perhaps, obstacles to reason, but to be aware of this very conflict is the price he must pay to be a whole human being.

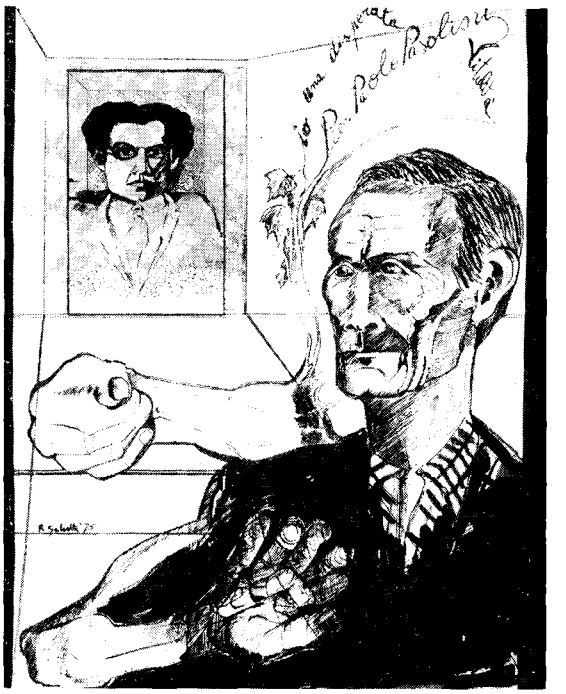
His admiration for Gramsci also contained elements of contradiction. In *Le Ceneri* the poet expressed frankly and courageously his doubts and uncertainties, in a poem which is both sensual and at the same time full of commitment and social awareness:

> 'The scandal of contradicting myself; of being both for and against you; for you in my heart, in the light; against you in the darkness of my being. . . .'

For Gramsci "in the light" illuminated by the advance of reason, a rational and historical vision; the "darkness of his being" opposed this, reacted mysteriously, the deep unconscious outside of reason betrayed the man (Pasolini) and his rational choice.

The "Humble People"

His Communism was ideologically based on the existence of a sub-proletariat of the cities, which had remained faithful, even if unconsciously, to an ancient culture of the peasantry. In this shape-



[1] For Pasolini the term "Sóttoproletariato" (sub-proletariat) did not carry any negative implications but defined a class which had its own identity and values. It is not to be confused with Marx's definition of *Lumpenproletariat*, nor with Victor Hugo's turgid literary image of *Les Misérables*.

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less and vital mass he saw an innocence untainted by the system of values of the bourgeoisie, a repetition of the humble revolutionary force of the early Christian times.

His "humble Italy" found literary and political expression in his most famous books: *Ragazzi di Vita* (1955) and *Une Vita Violenta* (1959), and his first film *Accattone* (1961).

In *Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo* (1964), an ideological parallel is drawn between these "humble people" and the early Christians. This film was an unprecedented work both on an artistic and cultural level; the fusion of two predominant elements in the life of the poet; Marxism and Christianity, their union-contradiction unleashes the revolutionary situation.

At this point an economic-political situation throws Pasolini's ideology into a state of crisis—the advent and explosion of the Italian "economic miracle". His "humble Italy" casts aside the simple peasant scale of values in favour of those of middle-class consumerism. This for him is a real ideological and cultural trauma.

Pasolini remains true to his brand of irrational Communism. What he loses is his point of reference with a political reality, and from this his historical regression began.

Loss of Political Reality

The search for the archaic myth (Oedipus Rex, Medea, Decameron . . .) in which to rediscover his vital link with the present; a present which he feels too often is hostile to him, but which he never evades:

> ". . . but I, who know in my heart that I can only live with history, will I ever be able to work again whole-heartedly, if I know that our history is ended?"

This loss of identification with a political reality is redeemed with poetry and with the polemist's honest asceticism. Now Pasolini no longer speaks on behalf of anyone but himself: against middle-class pragmatism, and the consumer society, against the tolerant falsity of capitalism, against the sensless violence. . . .

In 1970 in an introduction to a selection of his own poems he wrote:

> ". . . re-reading those verses of mine, and realising how naive I was to have put so much of myself into them as if I was writing for people who could not fail to love me. Now I understand why I have been an object of so much suspicion and hatred."

Perhaps his brutal death has nothing in common with that "suspicion and hatred". A moment of blind and primitive violence, without any other implication, if not destruction and old irrational fears.

His was a simple and tragic end, like that of one of his own characters, where life and death border on violence.

Pasolini, poet, novelist, polemist, film-maker, always paid the price of his own experiences (physically and intellectually); now he paid the extreme and greatest price.

> ". . . but this renunciation (of life) cost me agonies such that only a living man can understand."

Pasolini was a man of desperate vitality.

Completed from page 104

be chary of suggesting changes in the law of socialist countries until we have had the same problems to deal with, or bear the same responsibilities?

It would be tragic if Gollan's article were to prelude a further estrangement of our Party from socialism as it actually exists in the Soviet Union and socialist countries and from their internal and foreign policies. At present the whole imperialist set-up relies on anti-Sovietism as a key. While Gollan rightly disclaims any anti-Sovietism in our Party, yet in the present day neutralism can be a form of assent. If we exercise a fraternal right of criticism, then it is also our duty to make a much greater positive effort to inform people (and ourselves) about the Soviet Union and socialist countries, not just to bow from time to time in the direction of "socialist achievements". Far more information should be contained in our press and it is to be hoped that Soviet comrades will also be invited to take part in the discussion around Comrade Gollan's article and to contribute to *Marxism Today* on other important matters.

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Discussion Contributions on:

Class and Class Consciousness: Marx Re-examined

Gavin Mackenzie

(The author is a Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Cambridge)

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, and more particularly over the last months, this journal has published a number of articles devoted to the problem of class and class consciousness. A good deal of the discussion has focused directly on the current situation and composition of the British working class and, most importantly, its relationship to the middle class or classes. Explicit in much of this discussion has been the attempt somehow to "equate" the writings of Marx with the "realities" of class in contemporary British society. However, while in general the debate has been penetrating and stimulating it has been characterised by a common weakness: too often there has been a blending or indeed confusing of the pure or theoretical model of class structure propounded by Marx with his empirical discussion of the actual class structures of particular societies at particular times.

It is my contention that such a confusion (which represents a fundamental misunderstanding of Marx's own position) actually impedes the analysis of the dynamics of class in present-day Britain. In the paragraphs which follow, therefore, I should like to look at what I see as this "common weakness" of the current debate on class and class consciousness in Britain: such is my own contribution towards that debate.

TWO ISSUES

Any discussion of the class structure of capitalist society must start from a position in which the relationship between social classes is viewed as being one of exploitation and therefore of conflict. Marx's dichotomous model, by focusing on the ownership or non-ownership of productive property as the basis of class structure, brings into the forefront the fact that a minority of the population is able to exploit the mass by appropriating the surplus value created by this latter group. It must be stressed, however, that this dichotomous model of class structure was, for Marx, an *abstract* or *pure* type. As such, it is not something that can be "verified" or "refuted" by comparing it with the class structures of specific societies. For example, it is a commonplace to point to the emergence and development of middle or intermediate classes within nineteenth and twentieth century capitalism.. It is equally a commonplace to observe that Marx was not unaware of the existence of such groupings. And yet, recognition that Marx's abstract model of a dichotomous class structure is still not in accord with reality continues to give rise to tortured and unnecessary debate as to the "validity" or "applicability" of Marx's writings on class structure, class consciousness and class conflict.

In general that debate has revolved around two interconnected issues. First, there has been considerable discussion of the concepts of "productive" versus "unproductive" labour. Second there has been uncertainty concerning the categorisation of the ever increasing numbers of individuals who exercise *power* in industrial enterprises that they do not own. Both of these issues are, of course, concerned with the existence and role of the middle class and the composition and revolutionary potential of the working class within capitalist society.

Definition of the Working Class

Considering the definition of "productive" labour first, a number of standpoints have been taken on the question of whether or not a whole host of individuals engaged in various kinds of "mental labour" can be regarded as producers of surplus value. In this journal, for example, Bleaney recently claimed:

> "The productive labourer produces surplus-value, and the product of his labour is appropriated by the industrial capitalist. The unproductive labourer, however, is a *consumer* of surplus value, whose relation to industrial capital is that of a *competitor for the fruits of exploitation*, and nothing more. He is not directly exploited by capital."[1]

[1] Michael Bleaney, "The Working-Class Today", *Marxism Today*, February 1974, p. 55.

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Other writers have taken an opposing viewpoint, arguing that as unproductive labourers do not in general have the *power* to *appropriate* surplus value it is meaningless to exclude them from membership in the working class. The crucial feature of the relationship between the classes, it is pointed out, is exploitation—whether that exploitation be direct or indirect is academic. A vehement exponent of this view is Aaronovitch:

> "I include in the working class all who live by the sale of their labour power whether in the state or private sectors ... whether physical or mental (since they do not own the means of production)."[2]

This writer has also adopted a clear position with regard to the second aspect of the goodness of fit between Marx's abstract model of class society and certain features of contemporary capitalist society. Those who accept Aaronovitch's view that the distinction between productive and unproductive labour has little explanatory power are themselves divided over the question of how to categorise those mental workers or unproductive labourers who exercise control within the industrial enterprise. Thus Aaronovitch quotes Budish's definition of the working class with approval. For both these writers this category contains all those who must depend solely on the role of their labour power for a livelihood, but only as long as these people:

> "have no directing voice in determining the processes of production or the volume of output, who are subject to the direction of the employer—the owner of the means of production or his agents."[3]

This is also the line taken by Cohen in a recent article in this journal. This writer begins by arguing that the working class:

> "now includes considerable sections of people who would not previously have been included, people belonging to the so-called intermediate strata, scientific, technical, 'service', 'white-collar', workers of various kinds."[4]

However he then goes on to argue that:

> "the emphasis on the production of surplus value as the decisive criterion ... of the working class seems to me to be too comprehensive (as it) could embrace the top managerial groups whose role in the production process and relationship with the workers excludes them in my opinion from being regarded as members of the working class."[5]

Here Cohen was taking issue with a recent publication of the French Communist Party which had adopted the alternative viewpoint, arguing that membership in the working class depends simply on non-possession of any means of production, on involvement in the production of commodities and on non-participation in the appropriation of surplus value. In this view, then, it is legitimate to regard "managerial groups" and others exercising power within the productive enterprise as *bona fide* members of the working class as long as they themselves do not own capital and thus, like other workers, they depend on the sale of their labour power for existence.

Dahrendorf's View

It is fair to say, however, that the large majority of contemporary sociologists, Marxist and non-Marxist alike, side with Cohen in rejecting this latter, all-embracing view of the composition of the working class. They argue that those who control industry, whether or not they own that industry, represent the interests of capital and as such must be excluded from membership in the same class as workers in subordinate positions in the productive process. Somewhat surprisingly, this standpoint is often taken almost on intuitive rather than theoretical grounds, e.g. the work of Cohen quoted above. It is therefore ironic that the most developed and well argued theoretical justification for the exclusion of various "intermediate classes" from membership in the working class is that of Ralf Dahrendorf. In his *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* he explicitly develops what he regards as a "positive critique" of Marx—a critique which he suggests must result in the abandonment of a Marxian approach for any adequate understanding of contemporary "post capitalist" society.

It should be stressed that Dahrendorf is concerned, like Marx, with developing a theory of social class and class conflict, retaining a dichotomous view of class structure and regarding endemic class conflict as a major source of social change. Dahrendorf parts company with Marx, however, in his view of the *basis* of class position and therefore class struggle. For he does not see ownership versus non-ownership of the means of

[2] Sam Aaronovitch, "Perspectives for Class Struggle and Alliances", *Marxism Today*, March 1974, pp. 69, 73.

[3] Aaronovitch, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

[4] Jack Cohen, "Some Thoughts on the Working Class Today", *Marxism Today*, October 1973, p. 299.

[5] Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

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production but rather access to, versus exclusion from, *positions of authority* as the backbone of class structure.

> "Class theory is concerned with the systematic explanation of that particular form of structure—changing conflict which is carried on by aggregates or groups growing out of the authority structure of social organisations."[6]

Marx's analysis of the class structure of *nineteenth century* capitalism may well have been right, but right for the wrong reasons. To be sure possession versus the non-possession of property can ideed be seen as the basis of nineteenth century class antagonisms. However, this is not because property *per se* is of any significance but rather because its possession is a specific example of an authority and therefore a conflict relationship. *(Authority is seen as giving rise to conflict because, by definition, authority represents opposing interests between those commanding and those obeying.)*

Thus for Dahrendorf not only is Marx's analysis of the structure of nineteenth century capitalism an instance of a more general proposition but it is one that is no longer applicable to contemporary capitalist society. For, since Marx, industrial society has experienced a whole series of radical changes which, while they have not diminished the importance of class and class conflict, have made the ownership versus non-ownership of property redundant as an important basis of division within society. As might be expected, therefore, Dahrendorf sets great store by the (supposed) separation of ownership from control of the industrial enterprise, as well as by the emergence of a new middle class, divisions within the working class, a high level of social mobility and the "institutionalisation" of class conflict. Modern society is therefore very different from that experienced by Marx and thus the possibility of the "revolutionary reconstitution of society at large" has become progressively more unlikely.

In Dahrendorf's eyes, it is therefore more accurate to talk of contemporary industrial societies as being "post-capitalist" rather than simply "capitalist". To be sure, as in Marx's time, modern societies are still class societies, but the basis of class divisions and therefore class struggles no longer rests on a simple coincidence of ownership, control, authority and conflict.

[6] Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959) p. 152.

DISCUSSION

These then are some of the positions that have been taken by Marxist and non-Marxist writers on the "validity" of Marx's dichotomous view of class structure and its relationship with the concepts of productive and unproductive labour. I suggested at the beginning of this article that, in terms of a critique, much less a refutation of Marx, most of the debate on these issues was of little or no value. Specifically, much of that debate has only been possible because there has been an explicit fusing of Marx's pure or abstract (in Weber's term "ideal type") model of a dichotomous class structure, based on exploitation, which can be seen as underlying *all* forms of class system, and the realities of the class structures of particular capitalist societies at particular times.

The abstract model of class structure is essentially a model which stresses the *exploitative* nature of class relationships. And this focus upon exploitation rests upon the abstract notion of productive versus unproductive labour which in turn is dependent on the labour theory of value and thus the concept of surplus value. In other words, and to repeat, Marx is concerned with setting up a series of general or abstract propositions which will facilitate a clear understanding of the *"inner character"* of class society generally and capitalism in particular. The fact that the sociologist, in examining a particular society at a particular point in time will come across groupings or "intermediate strata" that do not fit neatly into the categories of productive or of unproductive labour, is then neither here nor there. Similarly, the labour theory of value cannot be "refuted" simply by the contemporary economist demonstrating that it cannot predict prices (which it cannot) or that labour power is not the only source of value. As Giddens has expressed it:

> "The import of the theory of surplus value (and the concepts of productive and unproductive labour, G.M.), as the 'secret' of capitalism, is that it demonstrates that the exploitative character of the capitalist order, like that of the class systems which have preceded it, is founded in the sphere of production. The conception of surplus value thus has to be judged not only, nor even primarily, in terms of how far it is able to provide satisfactory answers to the sorts of questions which occupy the focus of attention of modern orthodox economics (or sociology, G.M.), but rather in terms of its relevance as a theory of exploitation in class society."[7]

[7] Anthony Giddens, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies* (London: Hutchinson, 1973) p. 129.

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This means, of course, that to attempt to force specific cases of capitalist society into Marx's abstract model is fundamentally to misunderstand the purpose and nature of that model. To reiterate, by referring to the "inner character" of capitalism Marx is attempting to highlight its essential nature—the structure that underlies capitalist society in general, whatever specific characteristics are exhibited by particular societies at particular times. Indeed, while it is fair to say that nowhere does Marx attempt *theoretically* to examine the *relationship* between his abstract model and the realities of particular socities in any systematic manner he was certainly well aware of the fact that "intermediate" classes or strata existed in all known forms of class society.

MARX AND "INTERMEDIATE" CLASSES

In fact in his various writings Marx referred to at least three types of grouping that "complicated" the basic underlying dichotomous class structure. First there exist "quasi-class" or déclassé groupings: categories of individuals who, while they may share similar economic situations and therefore interests are nonetheless not fully *integrated* into the productive system and thus the class structure of a particular society. Such collectivities of individuals might be internally homogeneous or heterogeneous. An excellent example of the former is the independent peasantry of post-medieval Europe, while Marx's characterisation of the *lumpenproletariat* is a clear instance of a heterogeneous grouping on the margins of the social division of labour:

> "The *lumpenproletariat*, this scum of depraved elements from all classes . . . decayed roués with dubious means of subsistence and of dubious origin . . . ruined and adventurous offshoots of the bourgeoisie, vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds . . . pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, procurers, brothel keepers . . . tinkers, beggars—in short the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass."[8]

However, more important for the analysis of the dynamics of class structure is Marx's discussion of "intermediate" or middle classes and of the existence of differentiation *within* the two great classes. Taking the middle classes first: these can be seen as groupings which, although eventually losing their separate characters and becoming merged with one or the other of the two great classes, nevertheless play an important role in the development of capitalist society. To be sure, given the dynamic tendencies of capitalist production, intermediate classes will eventually find themselves pushed into either bourgeoisie or proletariat and class conflict will therefore become increasingly simplified and unfettered. Yet, until such time as this may happen, to ignore the existence and the "obscuring" role of the middle classes is to misunderstand the nature of extant capitalist (and indeed pre-capitalist societies. Indeed Marx criticised Ricardo for doing just that:

> "What (Ricardo) forgets to mention is the continual increase in numbers of the middle classes . . . situated midway between the workers on one side and the capitalists and landowners on the other. These middle classes rest with all their weight upon the working class and at the same time increase the social security and power of the upper class."[9]

"Transition" Classes

For Marx a crucial aspect of intermediate classes is that they are "transition" classes which is to say that they must be viewed as either "rising" or "falling". Examples of the latter would include classes that exist within a particular form of society but which have their roots in a set of relations of production that has been largely superseded, e.g. the continued existence within capitalism, especially in Germany and France, of feudal peasants who "still have to perform corvée services for their gracious lord".

In contrast, examples of "transition" classes that can be viewed as emerging or "rising" within a particular social structure would be the appearance and growth of an urban proletariat and bourgeoisie within feudalism as well as the rise of the petty bourgeoisie or class of managerial "officers" within capitalism. This last example is of particular importance as it is the existence of large numbers of professional and managerial occupations within contemporary capitalism that many commentators have seen as posing "problems" for Marxian analysis. I have tried to make clear that this is not the case. Marx was well aware of the existence of such middle class groupings and indeed often used a military analogy in describing the authority structure of industry:

> "Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under

[8] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (one vol.) (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1968) pp. 243, 138.

[9] Quoted in: T. B. Bottomore and M. Rubel, *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy* (London: Watts, 1956) pp. 190-191.

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> the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants."[10]

Nevertheless, the existence of such officers and sergeants or of "savants, lawyers and doctors" cannot be seen as "disproving" the abstract model of a dichotomous class structure or as "refuting" the concept of surplus value as the basis of a theory of exploitation. Rather they are transition classes which, *in the short run*, can be seen as obscuring or complicating the fundamental class basis of capitalism. In other words, capitalist (and pre-capitalist) formations contain a dynamic and a crucial aspect of that dynamic involves the emergence and development of intermediate or middle classes—classes which *continue* to develop until eventually they become absorbed into one or the other of the two great classes of a particular epoch.

Stages in Development of Bourgeoisie

For example, Marx isolated four stages in the development of the bourgeoisie—from its emergence as an independent and intermediate grouping within feudalism to its achievement of a position of dominance within capitalism. Needless to say, as soon as the bourgeoisie moved to this position of dominance within capitalism it ceased to be middle class, a term now reserved for other emergent groupings—groupings that would themselves in time become identified with either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. As Marx himself expressed it in the celebrated fragment on "Classes":

> "In England, modern society is indisputably most highly and classically developed in economic structure. Nevertheless, even here the stratification of classes does not appear in its pure form. Middle and intermediate strata even here obliterate lines of demarcation everyhere (although incomparably less in rural districts than in the cities). However, this is immaterial for our analysis. We have seen that the continual tendency and law of development of the capitalist mode of production is more and more to divorce the means of production from labour, and more and more to concentrate the scattered means of production into large groups, thereby transforming labour into wage-labour and the means of production into capital."[11]

Subdivisions within Classes

Finally throughout his writings, Marx takes cognisance of the fact that classes are often not homogeneous entities but contain subdivisions, "subordinate gradations" or even factions. This is the case within both the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Furthermore while *particular* divisions within one or the other of the two great classes are often explained theoretically, as I have already said, nowhere does Marx provide an *overall* theory which links the abstract dichotomous model of class structure with the existence of divisions within the two classes. And again such divisions are seen as "complicating" rather than undermining the abstract model.

For example, Marx refers to the "two great interests into which the bourgeoisie is split—landed property and capital" more than once and indeed often goes further, distinguishing between various "portions" of the latter. The term "lower middle class" is not a creation of the American sociological establishment. Thus in the Manifesto and elsewhere Marx is concerned to show that:

> "Entire sections of the ruling classes are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat, or at least threatened in their conditions of existence." [As a result] "the lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class."[12]

With regard to divisions within the working class, perhaps the most vivid of Marx's writings are concerned with the tendency of skilled craftsmen to set themselves apart from non-skilled sections of the working class. Similarly, writing in the 1870s and 1880s Engels referred to the "improved position of a more or less privileged minority" of the skilled working class whilst "At the same time the trades superseded by machinery were slowly starved to death."[13] Divisions within the working class were also starkly portrayed during this period in the United States. The rapid expansion of America led to an even greater shortage of skilled labour than, for example, in England while in addition in the United States the gap between skilled and non-skilled workers was intensified and reinforced by ethnic divisions.

> "Your great obstacle in America, it seems to me, lies in the exceptional position of the native workers.... Now a working class has developed.... But it still takes up an aristocratic attitude and whenever possible leaves the ordinary badly paid jobs to the immigrants, of whom only a small section enter the aristocratic trade unions... so that differences

[10] *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Moscow, 1959) p. 54.

[11] Karl Marx. *Capital*, Vol. III (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1960) p. 862.

[12] *Manifesto*, p. 58.

[13] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Britain* (Moscow, 1962) pp. 564, 511.

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> in the standard of life of different workers exist, I believe, in New York to an extent unheard of elsewhere." "Often there is a sudden violent *elan*, but the bourgeois need only wait passively and the dissimilar elements of the working class fall apart again."[14]

Nonetheless, despite the fact that Engels saw American "native workers" as occupying an "exceptional" position, like Marx he had no doubts that this could only be viewed as a short run phenomenon. Indeed "Once the Americans get started it will be with an energy and violence compared with which we in Europe shall be mere children."[15] And this, of course, is in keeping with Marx's perspective on the position or role of intermediate or segmented classes within capitalism generally. For, and at the risk of repetition, Marx was primarily concerned with developing an abstract model of the structure and thus "inner mechanism" of capitalism—an "inner mechanism" which can be viewed as "working with iron necessity towards inevitable results". To be sure, particular societies will progress toward that "inevitable result" at particular speeds and in particular ways.

The pure model of capitalism will always be modified in specific concrete instances which means that the form and role intermediate classes assume will differ from one society to another. Nevertheless, whatever the form of intermediate or fragmented classes the dynamic of capitalist production will eventually lead to their disappearance, with the abstract model of a polarised class structure becoming increasingly mirrored in reality. The two great classes can then be expected to become classes *for* themselves.

Three Processes of Polarisation

In Marx's abstract model of the revolutionary reconstruction of society at large and thus of the development of working class consciousness and the polarisation of the two great classes three processes are highlighted. First there is emiseration—the increasing disparity between the material wealth received by capital and that going to labour (with, concomitantly, the growth of the "reserve army" of surplus labour). This is, of course, a direct result of the falling rate of profit endemic within capitalism. Second, divisions or factions within the working class disappear. This Marx saw as resulting directly from the increasing trend towards mechanisation characteristic of capitalism and the consequent disappearance of the skilled worker. "... machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level."[16] Third, the intermediate classes either sink gradually into the proletariat or become incorporated into the bourgeoisie.

These aspects of the polarisation of the two great classes all contribute to the emergence and development of revolutionary consciousness on the part of the working class. And this consciousness is reinforced by the fact that the latter is increasingly concentrated in urban areas and in large-scale factories: a situation conducive to the dissemination of ideas and an *awareness* of a common exploited situation. (The increasing scale of production is, of course, inseparable from the growth of joint stock companies which Marx saw as being of crucial significance in the demise of capitalism, representing "... the abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist mode of production itself."[17])

CONCLUSION

It cannot be denied that Marx's writings on class and class consciousness are incomplete, occasionally unclear and at times even contradictory. For example, his discussion of the manner in which a class in itself becomes a class for itself, outlined briefly above, is pitched at far too general a level. This means that we are given few clues as to the *precise* conditions governing the emergence and subsequent development of working class consciousness within capitalist society. In other words, Marx can be accused of failing to state the *exact* nature of the relationship between his abstract model of the class structure of capitalism and concrete examples of that type of society.

But the lack of a clear definition of the theoretical relationship between the abstract model and historical examples must not be taken to mean that the distinction between abstract and concrete models does not exist. And yet it is a failure to make this distinction that has characterised a good deal of recent debate. It has been my contention in this article that such a failure obscures rather than illumines our understanding of class and class consciousness in contemporary Britain. And nowhere has this been more apparent than in discussions of "productive" versus "unproductive" labour, the "intermediate" classes and the criteria of membership in the working class.

[14] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence 1846-1895* (London, 1934) pp. 496-7; Lewis S. Feuer (Ed.), *Marx and Engels Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy* (New York: Anchor) p. 458.

[15] Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 497.

[16] *Manifesto*, p. 56.

[17] *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 429.

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Socialist Democracy - Some Problems

Pat Sloan

John Gollan's article in the January *Marxism Today* is both timely and outspoken. There are, however, some additional points which should be made.

First, as John says, and Bill Wainwright quotes in the *Morning Star*: "Lenin observed that there cannot be democracy without full information". This is absolutely true, but the USSR and other socialist countries remain, to this day, the most secretive. And Communists everywhere are affected. For example, John refers critically to the fact that in "most socialist countries leadership changes take place with little explanation or even none". Yes, indeed. And also, John Gollan should have self-critically noted, in our own Party. What explanation was ever given of the sudden change in General Secretary? Why was Congress faced with a *fait accompli* instead of having the right to make such a vital decision? Only, as far as I can see, because of the penetration and survival of "Stalinist secrecy" in our own Party. But while criticising others, let us at least be self-critical as well!

Democratic Centralism

John also correctly points out that Lenin's opposition to factionalism was the result of temporary "dangers" of "great difficulties and threatening new military intervention". Exactly, but under Stalin they became both permanent and international and this remains the case. It is still quite impossible, without violating Democratic Centralism, for Party members in different parts of the country to get together or to co-operate in drafting common views which they wish to present to Congress. The result is that every resolution must have a purely *local* origin, and wider collective discussion of it, so as to perfect it, before presenting it to Congress, is forbidden. The result is that the only *nationally* worked out views put before Congress come from the Executive, and this means, as was pointed out repeatedly in the discussions on Party Democracy and is again repeated in a letter to *Comment* of January 10, this year, that the Executive view always wins. Since we are not faced with the dangers alluded to by Lenin, I suggest that our attitude on this should be very much relaxed.

Incidentally, in one socialist country after another, because of this same limitation on the expression of criticism, it has required the non-party masses to become so dissatisfied as to revolt before necessary changes in leadership have been brought about. This is not how socialist democracy ought to work.

The combination in the Soviet Party of Democratic Centralism with the Constitutional position in the Soviet State that the Communist Party "is the leading core of all organisations of the working people, both public and state" does, in fact, make rule "from above" inevitable.

First, Democratic Centralism places authority absolutely in the hands of the leading organ of the Party. Secondly, the Constitution places authority in the hands of the Party throughout Soviet society. It therefore follows, naturally, that every decision of the Party is "unanimously" welcomed by the "entire population" through its organisations.

The "Stalin Constitution" was cleverly devised so as to provide, in the last resort, the "legal" possibility of persecuting any individual, Party or non-Party, who opposed any Party decision, since, under the Constitution, they were acting unconstitutionally!

And this remains the position today. If the leadership of the Communist Party in socialist countries had to be established and perpetuated by the merits of the Party, its members and its policy, its leadership would be effectively democratic. But so long as its leadership has to be enforced by the Constitution it is in fact guaranteed not by its merit but by "administrative" measures.

This, it should be noted, was one of the chief bones of contention in the Czech crisis.

Safeguards and Control

A great weakness of the Communist movement is that, up to date, no serious study has been made of what happens when the Party is in power and what safeguards are then necessary to prevent leadership from becoming dictatorship from above.

This in turn leads to the question of the extent to which, in the USSR, democracy involves the non-Party masses. The stream of directives from the top down is clear enough, but exactly what provision exists for the opposite stream? How often do non-Party cadres put forward ideas which

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are utilised in the public interest? We never hear of any. Yet we surely cannot believe that in the Soviet Union Communists alone have an infallible ability to make positive and useful proposals, while the non-Party masses are dumb.

Lastly, there is the question of "freedom" in general. I am old-fashioned enough to feel that the early Russian Marxists, especially Lenin and Plekhanov, were entirely right when they saw the artists' demand for "freedom of expression" as being the artistic equivalent of the bourgeois demand for "freedom of enterprise". Against this, they posed the socialist alternative of freedom of expression in the social interest.

It seems that we in Western Europe, in the post-Stalin period, have tended to fall for the idea of abstract "freedom" in our anxiety to liberate ourselves from Stalinist excesses. But is this position sound?

In the USSR today there is no doubt that "dissidents" are being permitted to continue *samizdat* publication and to secure publication abroad. What is the alternative? To arrest them and bump them off wholesale, as happened under Stalin. This is now, correctly, not allowed.

But what socialist editor or publisher is going to publish such anti-socialist ravings as much of Solzhenitsyn or the anti-peace writings of Sakharov? No socialist publisher can be reasonably expected, especially in a country where paper is still scarce, to print such anti-socialist material.

That control here is essential is obvious. The real question for discussion is not "should control exist" but *how democratic* is that control? If Soviet publishers refused to print anti-socialist books and articles after submitting them to a democratic cross-section of potential readers for judgment, and did not turn them down simply on the advice or instructions of some Party-appointed official, it seems to me the Soviet attitude could be fully and publicly justified before the workers of the world.

But here again, as in other matters mentioned earlier, profound secrecy prevails. On the one hand we are told that the "Soviet public" rejects such writings, and on the other hand we know that the "Soviet public" has never in fact been able to pass judgment on them, never having seen them at first hand. Surely, in such cases, a genuine sample of the Soviet public could pronounce judgment, and the public as a whole should know who are the panel which has taken a decision in their name. In this way the democratic control of publication would be ensured, and it is this sort of control which, under socialism, is essential.

Vigilance Against Whom?

In conclusion let us face the fact that, while "capitalist encirclement" is ended, the world is still divided into two camps, and the subversive presence of the CIA has recently had world-wide publicity.

There is an enemy at the gates, an enemy of all socialist states and of all Communist Parties.

We have had this before. British and French imperialism led the enemy camp after 1917, the leadership was then taken over by the Nazis, and it has now passed to the CIA.

When Stalin's "purges" took place the general evidence of Nazi subversion was so obvious that I credulously assumed, as did most Communists everywhere, that the alleged crimes had in fact taken place. Today, if any socialist country started a campaign to root out CIA agents, I would be sorely tempted once again to accept their official view as correct; but what we now know of the Stalin period causes us to have doubts.

The fact is that both vigilance and secrecy can and must be used by all socialist countries against the CIA and its subversion. But vigilance and secrecy against the CIA is not the same as vigilance and secrecy against the rank and file of the population. The years of experience of the USSR have tended to blur these two types of secrecy and vigilance, and one of our main problems, affecting the Communist movement everywhere, is to disentangle them. In fact, this problem might be named as the basic and most essential one which concerns socialist and communist democracy in the world today.

And there is no simple solution.

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Dorothy M. Friedmann

Comrade Gollan's article is timely. It is increasingly clear that, while *objectively* everything points to socialism as the only solution to capitalism's multiple problems, yet *subjectively* the people are held back by fears, fuelled by the Krushchov revelations, which are consistently presented as something inherent in a socialist system. To combat this view is clearly a vital political task, since only if socialism can be seen as giving freedom, not taking it away, can the masses be won.

The first part of Gollan's article is informative, and provides a cogent background to the Twentieth Congress report. It is when he comes to the present day that his dialectics seem to desert him. Here many of his statements and criticisms are based on an idea of what the Soviet Union "should" do—with little consideration of the present situation or of the origin of the "should" (a moral imperative?).

False Premises

In my view much of his argument is based on false premises, false assumptions about ideology and a tendency to apply ideas deriving from the pluralist concept put forward by Western Communist Parties (which may be perfectly applicable to countries where socialism will succeed many years of bourgeois democracy), as if they represented eternal truths.

What are these premises? Early in the article John Gollan remarks that "The fact that the socialist system emerged victorious from the supreme test of the Second World War put an end to all hopes of destroying it". All hopes? Are we to accept that the nuclear build-up, NATO, the re-arming of West Germany etc. have simply been deterrent measures embarked on because the stupid imperialists think there is a Russian menace? And is it not clear that, being frustrated militarily, economically and politically, the imperialists now pin their hopes on subverting ideologically? Why else did they attach so much importance to the "Third Basket"—so-called "freedom of information", in the talks before Helsinki?

To ignore this imperialist aim or play it down is to view the position in the Soviet Union totally unhistorically and to take the view that *at all times* ideas however false or damaging should be allowed unrestricted currency—in spite of the fact that Gollan himself concedes that restrictions were necessary in the pre-war period when unity and determination of the people were vital.

Necessary Restrictions

That unity and determination are just as necessary today. The Soviet Union has as a prime duty to work for the ideological education of the whole people—to help them to tackle the problems of socialism in a socialist way. This aim is perhaps harder to achieve now than in the pre-war period. At that time, difficult though the struggle was, the Soviet people could compare the stupendous achievements in their country with the stark misery of the crisis-racked capitalist world. Today, in spite of the millions of unemployed (who no longer starve), capitalism has in fact provided a range of personal satisfactions for very wide sections of society. That this is accompanied by colossal waste and pollution is often ignored or a matter of indifference to the individual immersed in consumerism or the hopes of future consumption. Socialism offers the long term rather than the glittering prizes. Restrictions, many of them necessary (e.g. if Moscow is not to become like Paris or Tokyo its population must be controlled; if there is a right to work there is also a duty to work and those who do not may be treated as parasites), are particularly irksome to the young and to intellectuals. The latter may hanker for privileges of income and housing which in the fairer socialist society they do not have.

All these dissatisfactions provide a soil in which a general criticism and undermining of confidence in Soviet society can flourish. This general criticism and cynicism can divert from the real task of making socialism more attractive, causing a tragic waste of much-needed talent, quite apart from the fact that "ideas when they grip the masses become a material force"—and bad ideas can also grip the masses. To suggest that, because we believe in man we must also believe that the people will always accept the truth and reject distortions, is a completely un-Marxist *non sequitur*.

Speaking of Sakharov, Gollan states: "No Communist would have a second's difficulty . . . in rebutting such views". This shows a false assumption about the nature of ideology; that all that is needed is to defeat an argument *logically*. Ideology is far more deep-seated. Dissidents are frequently not just "wrong" in their analysis. They are irreconcilables who in many cases nothing could convince. Dissemination of their works would certainly provide a rallying-point for petty-bourgeois ways of thinking and hold back the development of the Socialist personality which is the prerequisite of Communism.

Gollan says that "they would have no support whatever from the Soviet public". How does he know? Individualism dies hard and it is difficult to argue against the individualist egoism of "I've only got one life". While it is certain that their ideas

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would be widely rejected the Soviet citizen might well ask: "What do they want to publish such stuff for?" Here it may be said that the fact that even the most apparently honest, like Medvedev, seem to think they can launch changes from capitalist soil, or, as in the case of Plyusch, head for destinations such as freedom-loving Israel without a thought for the Palestinian camp-inmates, does not lend credibility to their stance.

Further Criticisms

Issue can be taken on many points. Why does Gollan accept Togliatti's charge of "degeneration" which the report of the Twentieth Congress repudiates? On what does he base his allegation of "regression from time to time"? Is it not opportunistic to call on our Soviet comrades to reveal even more about the breaches of legality in the Stalin period, thus hinting that they are guilty of a cover-up operation, without taking into consideration the practicalities of sifting thousands of files and testimonies relating to events up to forty years ago in a vast country? Have our Soviet comrades no right to decide whether in order to learn from mistakes it is necessary to examine every detail of a past period, re-open every scar? Why does Gollan accept the view of Western commentators and deny that Soviet doctors may sometimes correctly diagnose paranoia or other psychiatric disturbance in dissidents? By doing so he lends himself to a grave attack on the integrity of Soviet medicine.

What is the value of subjective statements such as "It appears to me that the still greater involvement of the people in decision-making is a major issue", while he speaks dismissively of the nation-wide discussion of draft laws, economic plans etc., which are the great strength of socialist democracy and without parallel in any other system? Incidentally his plea for more open government might find an application nearer home. Our Party does not reveal differences of opinion or details of discussions in our Political Committee; on an international level views may be put forward which we learn of only later from the press; we are not immune from "bolts from the blue".

Questions of Art and Literature

Gollan's confusion is also shown on the question of art and literature. If as Marxists we accept these as a response to the world and society, then it becomes obvious that much of the culture that flourishes under capitalism (even when in opposition to capitalism) is inapplicable to conditions in a socialist society. Viewed broadly, art and literature in a capitalist society today are centred on the individual—anxiety-ridden, sex hung-up, hedonistic, violent . . . the individual out on a limb in a hostile world. At best: "one who most has suffered takes his seat upon the intellectual throne . . . (telling) how the heart was soothed and how the head, and all his hourly, varied anodynes" (Matthew Arnold). And, be it said, often doing very nicely in the world of the media, publishing, the art galleries.

What relevance has much of this to the real objectives of socialist culture, which can only be the development of an individual profoundly optimistic, collectivist, moral and conscious? Yet these bourgeois trends have an undeniable attraction for precisely those potentially disenchanted sections mentioned earlier. The deification of individual despairs, "thrills" and fantasies can in fact divert creative people from the struggle for a *real* non-superficial socialist art and literature and leave the mass of the people virtually disfranchised artistically —with a weak, trendy élite art (English critics remarked on the derivative nature of the much-publicised exhibition of "non-conformist" art), a literature of distorted values and rubbishy popular productions for the masses. Incidentally this is near to becoming fact in some socialist countries where the intellectual tone is set by Western standards.

Of course there is a problem in any regulation of cultural matters. Masterpieces may be unrecognised. But is the hazard greater than under capitalism, when success rests with publishers' readers and medium entrepreneurs? Why does Gollan hint that "the problem may be exacerbated by the attitude of the official (sic) Union of Artists and Writers"?

Minority Views

There is a problem also of genuine minority views (as opposed to the ragbag of "opinions" derived from the capitalist world presented by many dissidents). It is surprising that Gollan does not mention the Lysenko affair, when overweening pride in socialism after the victory over fascism led to suppression of scientific truth, unjust demotions and vilifications, and dealt a serious blow to Soviet biology. But the problem will not be solved by equating Lenin's demand for information with a duty of the Soviet state to sanction misinformation and to legitimise every "opinion". We have long recognised that some opinions—e.g. racialism—should be outlawed. Every country must make its own decisions on these matters. We must remember that a Communist Party has a duty towards truth, and the fact that mistakes have been made about what is truth does not mean that, two thousand years later, we wash our hands like jesting Pilate and oppose to an alleged failure to "handle dissent" an ideological free-for-all. It is notable that Gollan goes far beyond demanding freedom to *hold* views (which is not in question) and advocates freedom to *propagate* them—i.e. in effect the abolition of the category of "anti-Soviet activities". Should we not

Completed on page 94

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